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THE

GREAT IRON WHEEL;

OR

Republicanism Backwards

AND

CHRISTIANITY REVERSED.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS

BY

J. R. GRAVES, A.M.,

Editor of the "Tennessee Baptist," "Southern Baptist Review," "Letters to N. L. Rice," "Little Iron Wheel," "Great and Solemn Duties of the Doctrine of a Believer's Apostasy," "The Pilgrim," etc., etc.

Nashville:
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ADDRESSED TO J. SOULE, SENIOR BISHOP OF THE M. E CHURCH, SOUTH

BY

J. R. GRAVES, A.M.,

Editor of the "Tennessee Baptist," "Southern Baptist Review," "Letters to N. L. Rice," "Little Iron Wheel," "Ground and Evils of the Doctrine of a Believer's Apostacy," "The Trilemma," etc., etc.

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DEDICATION

TO

Every American

WHO LOVES OUR FREE INSTITUTIONS AND SCORNS TO BE DEGRADED OR ENSLAVED IN CHURCH OR STATE;

To Every Christian

WHO LOVES THE TRUTH, AND DESIRES TO SERVE NO MASTER BUT JESUS, AND OBEY NO KING OR LAWGIVER BUT CHRIST, THIS WORK IS MOST CONFIDENTLY DEDICATED BY

ITS AUTHOR,

WHO HERE, MOST AFFECTIONATELY ACKNOWLEDGES HIS INDEBTEDNESS FOR AN ARDENT AND EARLY IMPLANTED LOVE OF REPUBLICANISM, IN CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL GOVERNMENT, TO THE FAITHFUL TEACHINGS, AND, ABOVE ALL, FOR HIS HUMBLE HOPE IN CHRIST, TO THE CONSTANT PRAYER, AND PIOUS EXAMPLE, OF HIS MOTHER.

PREFACE.

THE Author offers no apology for writing these letters upon the polity and doctrines of Methodism. He has done so, because he believed it to be his *duty;* and, doing it in the exercise of his inalienable right of "freedom of speech and the press;" having infringed the rights of no man, he offers apology to none.

They appear in their present form in compliance with the earnest wish of the thousands who read many of them in the columns of the Tennessee Baptist, for which they were originally written.

That, as literary productions, they are open to criticism, the author is fully aware; but they were not written for mere critics, in whose eyes the very heavens are unclean, but to men's business and bosoms, with sufficient perspicuity to be understood, it is hoped, and with sufficient force to be *felt*, it is believed.

The Author is confident that he will command the charity of those whom these letters may reach in their present form, by the simple statement, that they were thrown off at odd intervals of time snatched from the slavish routine of excessive editorial labors; and as the thought presented itself, it was hastily clothed with the first garment at hand, without time to use either brush or powder, chalk or rouge, and in such a garb they now go forth. To prepare them as the Author would desire to do, would require an amount of time which he despairs of being able to command for years to come.

The amount of repetition which occurs in the book is attributable to the fact, that each letter was originally intended for a separate

tract (in which form many of them will yet appear), that would be read by hundreds who might see none of the preceding or succeeding ones. But this feature, so far from proving a fault, may, unless so frequent as to tire, prove one of the excellencies of the book, since those points so repeatedly brought up are usually the most obnoxious features in the system under review, and their deformities will thus be the more thoroughly and forcibly impressed upon the reader's mind.

There is a class, and perhaps a large one, who may look upon these letters as an unprovoked attack upon an unoffending and peaceable denomination, and therefore pass sentence of condemnation upon it. It is not so much an unprovoked attack upon the unoffending, as a *defensive attack* upon the bellicose. The reader is here referred to the Introductory Letter. It is very far from being made upon a peaceable and unoffending denomination, but rather a battery reared against the most belligerent and offensive of all Protestant sects. The public is pointed to the weekly and monthly publications issued by the Conference presses from Maine to Florida, with which the land is being filled, and to the numberless books and tracts issued in one ceaseless tide from the mammoth Book Concerns in N. Y. and Tenn, with which the land is being flooded! Are these unoffending and inoffensive publications? Are these Concerns great "peace establishments?" Let any one examine one invoice of the controversial works and doctrinal tracts daily sent forth to the North and the South, to the East, and especially to the "Great West," and be satisfied as to their character. What assaults do they not contain upon Presbyterianism—upon the doctrines of Calvin and his "*horrible decree!*" In what terms are the doctrines of election and sovereign grace repudiated and denounced! The Episcopalians do not escape, for here are tracts especially devoted to the exposure of their claims, while no quarter is shown to Republican Methodists. But the author has not volunteered in the defence of these sects, since they are so well able to protect their own doctrines and practices against the attacks of their Methodist brethren.

He writes as a Baptist, and in behalf of Baptists. And have we

no cause to issue a defence; at least to show our assailants the weakness of their positions? In these publications, which are so rapidly multiplying, history is most grossly attacked and misrepresented, our distinctive doctrines most ruthlessly assailed, and our peculiar practices most shamefully reproached, and the most unwarrantable representations and appeals made to sour the public mind and inflame the bitterest prejudices of the multitude against American Baptists. Are instances demanded? He points to the pages of a work very largely circulated in Virginia and the South. Read this: "While *I am fully convinced* that the Baptists, as a denomination, had their rise in Germany in 1521 or 1832, under Nicholas Stork, Muntzer, John of Leyden, Kurpperdoling, and others, I have forborne giving an account of them as it is found in Robinson's Charles V., and in a View of All Religions, by Ross, published in London, 1664; as I know the matter to be very offensive to our Baptist friends," &c.—P. 9.

Again, "Thomas Stork held communion with God by means of an angel, '*yet I will not retaliate* by recounting the doctrines and practices of the German Anabaptists."* These are specimens of attacks made upon the History of Baptists, and this and other works are issuing by thousands monthly from the "Concern." The reader is referred to Letter XXXVII. (and will he turn and read it in this connection?) for samples of the language used with reference to our baptism—the action we exclusively practise being denounced as superstitious, indecent, disgusting, and sinful; and our terms of communion are constantly and everywhere assailed and repudiated in unmeasured terms of condemnation and reproach.

The "Great West" is to-day one great battle-field; and indeed the whole South is intensely agitated upon these questions, and the publications of the Book Concern, and numberless others, issuing from the Methodist press, South and West, more shameless even than the above, are brought into the field. The ten thousand circuit-riders echo,——iterate and reiterate these sentiments in the

* Slicer on Baptism of the testimony of candid Historians, see chapter on Primitive Church Constitution.

ear of the multitude, and scatter these books and tracts broadcast, as the winds scatter the autumnal leaves. The Author then appeals to the press and to the world to decide, if Baptists do not owe it to themselves and to the principles they represent and most conscientiously believe, to defend themselves from undeserved contumely, and their principles from unmerited reproach? If these Letters are considered an attack, let them be looked upon as an attempt to *spike the enemy's guns*, in which effort, the aid of the Baptist press of America is most affectionately and earnestly invoked.

Nor have these Letters been written in a bitter and vindictive spirit, although the severity of the language employed may occasionally indicate it. The Author has not been conscious of entertaining such an emotion for one moment. He has written "more in sorrow than in anger." He entertains the kindest feelings towards all Christians, and those whom he considers in error, he looks upon as "more sinned against than sinning," for their leaders do cause them to err. Principles, and not men, he has endeavored to discuss, and erroneous and pernicious principles cannot meet with reprehension too severe, if the Saviour or the apostles are allowed to be worthy examples in the rebuke of such.

With fervent prayer, that the Letters may accomplish the end for which they were written, and that any angry feelings they may at first awaken, may be overruled to a candid investigation of the facts advanced and the principles advocated, they are now submitted by the

AUTHOR.

NASHVILLE, *Jan.* 1855.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER, ... 9

LETTER II.—Methodism cannot justly be called a Church of Christ, because too young by 1747 years—it being only 63 years old, ... 19

LETTER III.—The system of Methodism cannot justly claim to be a Church of Christ, because of human origin—an invention of men, ... 34

LETTER IV.—An important principle—the Church of Christ is of Divine origin—founded by Christ in the days of the Cæsars—Methodism, by John Wesley in the days of George III., ... 44

LETTER V.—Christ forbade his disciples to teach the observance of any thing he had not taught them—Admission of Dr. Bangs—Methodism a human invention; proved by Bishop Soule's own words, by Wesley and Methodist writers generally—is the granddaughter of Rome—the grandchild of the "Man of Sin," and Son of perdition! the Churches of Christ cannot fellowship it, or receive any of its acts, ... 59

LETTER VI.—Methodism an accident—The first chapter of the Discipline revised—Its statements at variance with facts—Methodists who trust to it are deceived—Mr. Wesley was opposed to Episcopacy—Did not believe in three Orders, ... 66

LETTER VII.—The first Chapter of the Discipline wholly untrue—Methodists are Deceived who believe it—Methodist History and John Wesley against it—John Wesley did not believe an Episcopal Bishop a Scriptural Order in the Ministry—He himself would prefer to be called a knave, rascal, or scoundrel, than Bishop—The direct Testimony of Bishop Bascom, D D., 75

LETTER VIII.—Methodism as it was—Its origin and design to study the Classics—Methodism without either Altar or Divinity—Its members and preachers all Unconverted—Wesley's Conviction and Conversion—His Experience—A serious question: Who may be said to be the originator and instigator of the works and devices of wicked men? 90

LETTER IX.--Methodism in Georgia in 1736—John and Charles Wesley sail for Georgia to convert the Indians, and to plant Methodism in America —Trouble on shipboard—Immersion of Mary Welch—Mr. W.'s admission— Difficulty on land—Mrs. Parker's child—Mr. Wesley charged by his brother of being quarrelsome—Trouble with a lady—Mr. Wesley a rejected lover— His revenge—Is apprehended, tried, and condemned—Flees from justice, and leaves Savannah by night—Seeks the sea-coast, and sails for England, . . 102

LETTER X.--Methodism not necessarily a Christian Society—May be composed of sinners alone, preachers and members, as at first—Capt. Foy the inventor of Class-Meetings, Class-Leaders, and Stewards—A Catechetical Review of the facts of this letter, ... 111

LETTER XI.—"Methodism as it is"—Introduction, ... 122

LETTER XII.—Methodism began in America by a woman—Mr. Wesley falsely charged with forming an Episcopal Church, and ordaining Coke a Bishop—Methodist Episcopacy originated by fraud and forgery—Methodists know not whether Bishops are Bishops or Elders—Divided among themselves, 128

LETTER XIII.—Methodism claims for Mr. Wesley, and for its Bishops, the "divine right of kings"—That Mr. Wesley founded the Methodist Church in America, and the Bishops rule it, by the "special grace of God"—Methodism still holds and teaches the Popish doctrine of Order and Succession! . 143

LETTER XIV.—The politics of Methodism, ... 153

LETTER XV.—Methodism a Great Iron Wheel—a Clerical Despotism—and yet American Christians tolerate and support it, ... 159

LETTER XVI.—Methodism the Popery of Protestantism—as absolute and all-controlling as Jesuitism—Papal Bishops, ... 169

LETTER XVII.—A Methodist Bishop the Pope of Protestantism—His overwhelming despotic powers, ... 182

LETTER XVIII.—Methodist Presiding Elders—Sub-Bishops—Their irresponsible and oppressive Powers, ... 195

LETTER XIX.—The Travelling Preacher—the allegiance required—The duties imposed—The servants of servants—Yet in their turns allowed to exercise great authority over the rights of the laity—The class-leaders and 4th wheel, or stirrers—Stewards—An important question, "Do not the clergy, the rulers of Methodism, belong to a Church by themselves, the Annual Conferences, or Preacher's Church, into which no layman can enter—a Church within a Church?" 207

LETTER XX.—Local Preachers—What they forfeit in locating—Strong considerations to keep them in saddle—They are degraded—The petty oppression to which they subject themselves—Loss of influence, . . . 225

LETTER XXI.—The Roman Catholic features—The doctrine of the Power of the "Keys" held by the Methodist Clergy in common with the Pope—The Divine right to govern held by the Methodists in common with the Pope and Priests of Rome—Methodist Ministers claim the power to admit into, and exclude from their societies, whomsoever they please, and the Discipline grants them the power, ... 234

LETTER XXII.—The principle of the "Key Power" still further examined—It involves the Romish Dogma of Apostolic Succession and Infallibility—All Protestant Church Polities are administered in accordance with this Doctrine—Protestants cannot successfully combat the Papacy, ... 247

LETTER XXIII.—The influence of power and rank upon Ministers of the Gospel is pernicious—Promotes ambition, &c., ... 266

LETTER XXIV.—The Episcopacy and the People—Dedicated to American Methodists—The Principles of legitimate Governments—Man's inalienable Rights—They cannot be conceded or alienated without Sin—They cannot be usurped without Impiety—What is a Tyranny and a Despotism, according to Bishop Bascom?—Methodism proven to be a Tyranny, a clerical Despotism, Anti-American in its Genius and Tendency—Republicanism backwards—A New Definition of Methodism, and an Illustration, . . . 276

LETTER XXV.—Is Methodism Republican? 308

PART II.

LETTER XXVI.—The peculiar Doctrines and Usages of Methodism—"A Calvinistic Creed, a Popish Liturgy, and an Arminian Clergy," . . . 327

LETTER XXVII.—The Discipline—Its Popish Liturgy—Its Marriage Service borrowed from the Romish Church—The Mummeries of Rome Protestantized, ... 336

LETTER XXVIII.—The Popish features of the Discipline—Unscriptural terms of admission—The Societies used as drag-nets to sweep the world into the Methodist Church, ... 345

LETTER XXIX.—Seekership—Its unscripturalness—Its pernicious tendency—The testimony of a Presbyterian, ... 352

LETTER XXX.—Inconsistencies—Admitting acknowledged sinners into the Church, and debarring for six months an acknowledged Christian from entering'—Giving baptism by force to non-believing children and unconscious infants, and refusing baptism to the professed Christian for six months! . 364

LETTER XXXI.—The Class-meeting law—An essential feature of Methodism—Exclusion the penalty for its violation—Is confessedly a commandment of men—To submit to it is to obey and serve men, ... 375

LETTER XXXII.—Band-meetings—Virtually confessionals—Sinful thoughts must be confessed to the Preacher—Their tendency—The opinions of Presbyterians, ... 384

LETTER XXXIII.—The Proselyting features of Methodism—The Influence of the Class-leader—Aid, patronage, and suffrage offered to all who will either join or "groan"—A popish feature, &c.—How Presbyterians regard it, 403

LETTER XXXIV.—Baptism—Methodists have two distinct "baptisms," one for infants and one for adults—A distinct and different office for each—A distinct and altogether different design for each—The regeneration of infants in baptism in all cases, plainly taught in the Discipline and standard works of the Book Concern, ... 415

LETTER XXXV.—Adult Baptism distinct from infant—Its design, with the exception—No faith required of the adult, save that required by the Romish Church—And no profession of regeneration as a condition of baptism—Regeneration ordinarily the same with baptism, ... 423

LETTER XXXVI.—Infant baptism in a New Light—Tried by the Creed, the Catechism, and the Ritual, and condemned by the word of God—Thirty untruths taught in the baptism of one infant, ... 436

LETTER XXXVII.—The action of baptism—The Discipline acknowledges immersion as a scriptural act of baptism—It is so admitted in the older standard works published by the Methodist "Book Concern"—Mr. Wesley admits immersion to have been the primitive action in his Journal, in his Notes on N. T.—Adam Clark—Benson—And yet it is pronounced an unscriptural and indecent action in other works published by the Book Concern, and by the whole Methodist press in the South—Admissions of two Presbyterians, two Catholics, and two Episcopalians, ... 451

LETTER XXXVIII.—The Methodist terms of communion—None so close, or so unscripturally close—They invert the ordinances and violate the divine order—The Discipline forbids Methodist preachers to invite members of other denominations—All who commune with Methodists must not only believe, but dress like them—Close communion in marrying—In trading, in Sabbath-Schools, in Singing-Schools, and "Tune Books"—Baptist communion not close—The testimony of Mr. Hibbard, Mr. Griffin, . . . 470

LETTER XXXIX.—The "Calvinism" of the Creed and the Arminianism of the Clergy—The "Articles of Religion" Calvinistic—They preclude the idea of the ultimate apostasy of the believer—The ground of Justification examined—The Scriptural argument—The Methodist Clergy preach against their own creed, as well as teachings of Holy Scripture—Revival and Camp-meeting excitements—The Doctrine of Apostasy made necessary—The tendency of such teaching and doctrine is to make infidels, ... 500

LETTER XL.—Primitive Church Constitution—Republicanism and Christianity Direct, ... 544

The Great Iron Wheel.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

To J. Soule, Senior Bishop of the M. E. Church, South.

Dear Sir:—Should the inquiry arise in your mind, or the mind of the reader of these letters, why they were written, or why addressed to yourself? I answer, I am prompted to write them in order to place myself in my true position before the public, and to convince the Christian world that I have, as has every Christian minister of the gospel and religious editor, sufficient and weighty reasons for opposing the religious system denominated "Methodism." Nothing but an ardent desire that *truth*, and *truth alone*, should prevail, moves me to oppose Methodism, or to address this series of letters to you.

During the past six years, in the conscientious discharge of my duty as a minister, and the Editor of a religious Journal. I have repeatedly weighed serious objections against many of the doctrines and peculiar features of Methodism, and, almost in every instance, I have been charged with misapprehension, or gross misrepresentation of its doctrines and polity, without receiving, when I have most respectfully and repeatedly

sought it, the light, either to correct my errors, or the proof to satisfy me of the alleged injustice done.

I have, for years past, earnestly wished to examine the scriptural claims, polity and influence of the system of Methodism, in a calm, candid manner, with one whose confidence in its heavenly origin, and divine sanction would qualify him to do so with equanimity of temper and a Christian spirit.

It is a time-attested axiom, that truth loses nothing, but gains every thing from examination. I propose nothing, therefore, which you can possibly construe into an insulting and injurious attack upon your system—if you regard it founded in truth, and sustained by divine authority—but on the other hand, a course that will afford you an opportunity to correct the erroneous views (if they be erroneous) entertained concerning your peculiarities, by a majority of those not intimately connected with your societies, and thus to aid materially in recommending and disseminating them.

I have chosen to address this series of letters to you, in preference to any other person for several reasons.

1st. You are the senior Bishop of your society South; I believe the senior of all Methodist Bishops in America.

2d. As I have intimated, all previous attempts to discuss the peculiar features of your system with the conductors of your press or the leaders of your party, have been met, not with reason and proof, but with derision and personal abuse. In every instance the *arguments* have been left for the *man*, since it was far easier to abuse the latter than to answer the former. Rome served her heretics thus. I greatly mistake you, if you are capable of such a course.

3d. I have respectfully and repeatedly requested information touching sundry parts of your system and denominational usages, best known to its originators, legislators, and executors but have been answered with insult and scorn;

and consequently I have been left to misrepresent you to the world, unintentionally, if I have indeed misapprehended any part of your polity.

This ought not to be so. The different religious denominations ought to understand each other's polity and doctrines perfectly, that they may agree, where agreement is possible. It seems to me far better to endeavor to diminish our real differences, and seek approximation by calm and friendly discussion, and the abandonment of *all unscriptural* tenets, than to increase the distance by misapprehension of our views.

4th. I address you, sir, because you now fill, and have for years filled the highest office in your Church, as one of its "chief ministers" and the oldest successor of Wesley,—a position of great trust and *fearful responsibility!* You certainly will not bring a reproach upon your *office*, if you have no respect for your own personal character, with an unbecoming reponse.

5th. It is, furthermore, presumable that no one in your connection is better acquainted with the origin, history, genius, usage and influence of American Methodism than yourself, since its years and your own are equal, and you are happily endowed with the talent of clearly expressing your ideas, when it is your pleasure to do so.

6th. I address you, sir, because, if you reply, you will doubtless do so in all candor, and in the fear of God, since the hoar frost on your head, and your trembling frame admonish you that in a few days more, you must stand before that solemn bar and give an account of your bishopric—of all you have taught, and enjoined upon men to teach and observe.

Judging from your time of life, you must have entered into the confines of Bunyan's Beulah land—the place of all others best fitted for calm reflection and an honest retrospection of your *past life*, so that whatever of error you have

taught or countenanced, you can correct before you are called to pass the dark waters of the river that rolls before you, and upon whose very margin your feet already now tread.

If, upon a final examination of your teachings, you find nothing to correct, you will be afforded the privilege of putting the seal of conclusive scriptural proof upon them, which your knowledge of God's Word, acquired by the study and experience of more than a half century, qualifies you to do as well as any man now living, and thus you will be able to close a long life by sealing your course and teaching with its gathered fruits.

But should you decline entering upon the defence of your system, and should you find nothing in these letters to which you think successful contradiction can be urged, you will not be expected to reply,—*your silence will be considered an all-sufficient consent to the correctness of the facts they contain.*

Truly, those who do not consider you as ambitious in your aims, must acknowledge you sincere in your creed. You have given the vigor of youth, the strength of manhood, and the weakness of age to the extension of your system. From the Alleghanies to the Gulf, what mountains have you not crossed, mid summer's heat and winter's cold, what streams have you not forded or swam, what defiles have you not threaded, what fatigues have you not endured or dangers braved in the devious steps of your elevation, from a laborious preacher to the almost imperial office and power you now fill and sway. By the dint of native talent and unconquerable perseverance you have forced your way from obscurity to your present place of honor, of tremendous influence, yet *awful responsibility.* You cannot, if the *manhood of mind* remains, look with contempt upon any one, however humble, or assume a weight of *dignity* to avoid noticing arguments which you are convinced are not in your

power to answer. You leave all such tricks to *self-important brainless* clergymen, and *new-made doctors* of divinity. Man is *only* man's equal, and neither a salary nor a factitious *position can make him more than the equal of his contemporaries.*

But alas, sir, how fearful to you now would be the thought, that you have exhausted the whole of life, hazarded all those dangers, underwent all those toils to advance the interests of an organization, not instituted by Jesus Christ, or authorized by his word—but a mere human, man-devised system—a rival fold, whose very being and advancement is hostile to, and subversive of, the Church and Kingdom of Christ, set up by him and designed to fill the whole world! What an awful thought for an aged minister about to die, that he has spent his long life and exhausted all his mighty powers of mind and body in opposing the Kingdom of Christ, and diverting those seeking to enter it into a rival organization, which, becoming universal, would blot out the doctrines, constitution, and very being of Christ's Church from the world!! What a soul-piercing thought would this be—the very fear of which is quite sufficient to deter you from harboring a reflection or engaging in an examination that might lead to it. But, what will error, however sincerely believed, avail a man upon a bed of death or at the bar of the Great Judge!! The truth alone can save us.

And are you prepared, sir, to say there is not the least possibility that a candid and prayerful examination of your discipline, by the light of God's Word, would force that thought upon your mind? Are there not more than two millions and a half of professed Christians in this Union, who look upon you as in gross error, and misleading others? and among this number scores, and indeed, thousands distinguished as the best scholars and most pious Christians of this age?

I do not urge this consideration as sufficient of itself for you to renounce your creed, but is it not enough to exhort you to examine *once more*, *candidly* and *prayerfully*, ere you leave the world, the doctrines and polity of your society, and decide with the Word of God in your hands and your eye upon his Bar, whether Methodism was originally "set up" by Christ, and conformed in organization, doctrines, membership, laws, offices, and usages, to the Divine Pattern and Model given by Christ?

Such an examination can do you no harm, and it may be of incalculable advantage to *you*, and to the millions of your followers, both in this world and in the world to come.

If an examination should convince you of your mistake, you have already far too little time to counteract your past influence, and pull down what you have spent a half century in building up. If you have labored nearly a whole life under a mistake, you owe much to the world, and much to your God, before you are prepared to leave the one or to meet the other. If your society is not a Christian Church, i. e., a scriptural one, and set up by Christ, it is an *Antichristian* organization—being opposed to Christ's teaching and the extension of his church in the world—and should you judge yourself by the rule you judge others, you would decide a life spent, however sincerely, in establishing the doctrines and kingdom of Antichrist, is illy prepared to "pass that solemn test:" "Have ye done all things whatsoever *I* have commanded," and receive the "Well done, *good* and *faithful* servant."

Ignorance cannot be plausibly urged, since there is little excuse for ignorance in this age of Bibles. Sincerity in error can be pleaded by the blindest idolater.

Your broadest charity hardly admits a Loyola or a Xavier to a Christian's heaven · and who more sincere than they,

if a long life of toil and sacrifice sufficiently attest sincerity! The fact that a man or society has accomplished a large amount of good is not sufficient to prove that he is a Christian, or that such a society is a Church of Christ, or entitled to the name of Church. If so, we might canonize heathen philosophers and modern sinners, and pronounce our Bible and Tract Societies scriptural churches of the Lord Jesus. The Romish Apostacy has accomplished much good, and the church of Luther in his day vastly more, yet the former is the Man of Sin, and the latter a manifest "harlot"—the fruitful mother of infidelity, and the curse and bane of religion in Germany. A man or society, propagating a wrong system or practice, always does inconceivably more evil than good.

I drop these remarks to correct the impression that "it matters little what we believe so we are sincere, and there is no doubt about a man's salvation if he has done a great deal of good." We are saved by grace through faith—by faith *in*, manifested by obedience *to*, Jesus Christ. We must believe the *proper facts*, and certainly, to manifest our love and fidelity to Christ, we must obey the commands he has required at our hands: not those we ourselves institute, or others may impose upon us.

I offer one more reason for addressing *you*. In *age*, in experience and knowledge of divine things, you are a father—one able to impart instruction in the proper *spirit*, and when you look into the open grave at your feet, I must conclude from the proper *motive*. You have lived long enough for yourself, and have reached a position in your society sufficient to satisfy the loftiest ambition; nothing should now interest you so much as the welfare of religion, the salvation of sinners, and to meet God in peace. A few days hence and creeds and parties will concern you no more.

Can you do nothing even now to unite Christians and bless the world?

Look at the distracted state of Christendom—look at Tennessee and the South-west! What a spectacle! The so-called Christian churches armed in bitter hostility! Methodists and Baptists engaged in an exterminating warfare. Presbyterians and Methodists in East and West Tennessee unchurching and unchristianizing each other, and pronouncing each other's peculiar doctrinal teaching dangerous to the souls of men!* Will Tennessee or the world ever be christianized so long as this state of things exist? Will the world ever believe on Christ? If all the world were this day converted and banded under the colors of these hostile parties would it be a millennium? Peace would no more be restored than now, since opposites and contradictories must of necessity *antagonize*. The state of things as it now exists is frightful. But storms of tenfold fury await the years to come. What we now feel is but the breathings of a zephyr in comparison to the whirlwind that is rushing upon us. The great questions of this age are, "Which of all the claimants is the true Church of Christ? Ought Christ Jesus alone to be obeyed in religious matters, or may the authority of Bishops and Elders be regarded?"

The contest, in a word, is between Bible-*ism* and man-*ism*. You are as well convinced—you *know* as well as myself, and the world *should* know, that all the ten or twelve so called evangelical, yet conflicting denominations cannot be the churches of Christ, equally scriptural in doctrine, polity and practice.

Two, much less a dozen, contradictory propositions cannot

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* I allude to the pamphlet publications of Annan, Musgrave, Ross, Graves, (O. S. Pres.) Burrows, (C P.) and McFarland, (Meth.)

be equally true! If Christ set up a visible kingdom, or build a church, which he came to do, as well as to suffer, he must have given it a definite organization—he must have given either a rule or an example—directions or a *pattern* for its building and government. It is therefore certain, if any one of all the ten denominations is justly entitled to the name *Christian*, *only one is, or can be*, since they are all dissimilar—*radically opposite and subversive of each other.*

If the Methodist E. societies are churches of Christ, scriptural organizations, Baptists' churches are not. The former or the latter are manifestly in *gross error.*

The history of the past few years, and the present posture of affairs, convince you that the principles and practices of our relative societies fiercely antagonize. The kingdom of Christ is not thus divided against itself. Both are not—cannot be scriptural, or gospel churches.

The mechanic well knows that two, or twenty things, cut after the same pattern, will be alike. The mathematician tells us that "things equal to the same thing are equal to each other." If our churches were organized according to the Divine direction and pattern, would they not be in all respects similar, and we be one people—in *one* fold and under *one* shepherd?

To bring this serious and solemn subject to our own "business and bosoms." If I am right, you are wrong; if you are right, I am wrong. If you are following Christ, I am serving Antichrist, and *vice versa*, since we are opposing each other and pulling down what the other builds! A follower and servant of Antichrist! fearful, awful thought "Lord, is it I?"

I make this appeal to you as a Christian, occupying life's honest place—the steps of the tomb. I beseech you in the name of Christianity, to tell me candidly wherein I err in

regarding Methodism as an Antichristian organization. Convince me, I beg of you, of my error, if I am fighting against Christ. Expose before me and the world the errors, if I err, that I am spending life and treasure to disseminate If you refuse, when you have it in your power to correct and undeceive me, will you not have to answer for the evils you might have prevented? I profess to you, before all men, that I will give you a heart honest, I trust, and open to the convictions of truth. Should you not see fit to respond, the world shall be satisfied that it is not because the language or spirit of these letters is offensive or unchristian, or that the matter contained in them is of little moment.

Your replies shall be faithfully printed in this paper,* whether your own journals reciprocate the favor or not.

Yours with due respect,

J. R. Graves.

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* The "Tennessee Baptist," published in Nashville, Tennessee, in which these letters originally appeared.

LETTER II.

Methodism cannot justly be called a Church of Christ, because too young by 1747 *years—it being only* 68 *years old.*

Dear Sir:—Genealogical tables have, I believe, in this country, fallen into disrepute, indeed are, for many potent reasons, very obnoxious to American sovereigns, whose blood is an adulterous compound of that of every nation of earth. Few of our proudest families would have their genealogy published, since it might disclose facts that would be considered disgraceful and ruinous to the prospects of its members. Many of our "blood royals" would in two or three *back steps* land into a cellar or poor-house. Many a puffy aristocrat, who now affects to overlook honest poverty and industrious mediocracy, would be introduced to a father who followed the honest calling of "organ" or "sausage" grinder, or his genealogy in this respect might be like that of the King of Salem! Owing to the uncertain direction of lineal descent, gentlemen of this day usually ignore their genealogy altogether.

Yet, sir, to be able to establish a connection with, and direct descent from, an ancient family, is a matter of the highest importance in establishing a claim to an entailed estate, and sometimes even the simple age of the claimant determines a decision.

For example, Lord A. dies, and leaves his estate to his

youngest son, B. Now C. D. and F. appear in court, and each claim to be the veritable youngest son of A., and they establish several points of *similarity*. Now in two ways can their claims be decided. Let the clerk call upon them to swear to their ages. C. affirms his age to be 20, D. his to be 25, and F. 30. Now the old family record is brought into court, and from that the court learns that the youngest son of Lord A. was born A.D. 1790, and if now living, would be 62 years old; would not the testimony of those claimants prove them to be impostors?

But suppose their ages correspond, when we come to cross-examine them as to their family connections, the court learns that *no blood relationship* ever existed between their families and that of Lord A.; but that they sprung from a family of a similar name, and a most bitter enemy of that of Lord A.'s. Would not this fact both disprove their claim and dishonor the claimants?

Suppose Lord A. had been dead for a century, and the estate was now to be divided among his legal heirs, would not each claimant be required to establish his blood relationship to show it? If he failed to prove consanguinity, his claim would be null; but if from his own testimony he proves himself to be of another family, his imposture would be manifest. Thus we see age often, and descent, ever constitutes a matter of the highest importance in establishing claims to an entailed estate.

Your quick perception has already apprized you of the force of this illustration against the claim of your Society. Christ came to set up a kingdom, not of this world, and such as the world had never seen. He fulfilled at his death his mission. He himself declared a few hours previous to his crucifixion, that he had "finished the work the Father had given him to do;" and upon the cross he exclaimed, "I [illegible]

finished!" If to "set up a kingdom," or in his own language, "build a Church," was a part of his work, he must have finished it before his death, because, after the giving of the Supper, we can learn no new law enacted, no new rite or ordinance given, but simply the information that the doctrines and laws of his kingdom, *as he had taught them*, involved in the term "*Gospel*," were to be taught to, and enjoined upon all nations; and also he promised to aid and empower them with the Holy Spirit, who should bring all his teaching to their remembrance, and vindicate the divinity of their mission by "signs and miracles following."

As the temple was finished before it was dedicated to worship by the visible descent of the Spirit, so the Church of Christ was finished before it was dedicated to the work of the world's evangelization by a visible manifestation of the Spirit. The Church of Christ was organized during the entrance of his ministry, and not only the prophets, but Christ himself distinctly foretold that it should *not be destroyed*, but should stand and be perpetuated through successive and multiplied churches until it filled the whole world. When a religious sect, therefore, stands claimant to the heirship of this most glorious inheritance of perpetuity, it becomes positively necessary for it to exhibit indisputable proofs of at least two facts—1st, Relationship; 2nd, Structural Identity: either of which answers to blood.

I mean by relationship, that the religious people, so claiming, must establish the fact of the existence of a similar people to themselves, holding and teaching similar doctrines and principles of Church polity, during the Apostolic period (A. D. 100,) and by the apostles recognized as Christians: and also from this period down through succeeding centuries, until the present, so far as the imperfect records of Ecclesiastical and civil history allow; I say *imperfect* since there is

not extant an entire history of even the Romar Empire, possessing the advantages it did of almost countless historians.

This letter is devoted to the impartial examination of the claims of your system of Methodism to be recognized as a legitimate heir to the title, consideration and inheritance of a Church of Christ.

Suppose it brought into court; I have nothing to do but to allow my counsel to ask its age, and it will decide its own fate.

Counsel.—What is your age?

Methodism.—May it please your lordship [it betrays its English parentage,] I was *conceived* in the year of our Lord 1729, and born Anno Domini 1739, in England, and christened with my present name in America, A. D. 1784, and just sixty-eight years ago last June.*

Counsel.—Did you ever hear or read in your family records of a family of your name living prior to 1729, to whom you are related?

Methodism.—Never one of my name existed before, as I can learn from any source, and no pains have been spared, I assure you, in the investigation. My lineage is established by the most satisfactory and irrefragable proofs. My mother is the Church of England, the oldest daughter of the Holy Catholic Church of Rome, which is undoubtedly a scriptural (?) Church, since she is distinctly mentioned, and her history given in the Scriptures! (see Rev. xiii.) My parents, on my father's side, were John and Charles Wesley, Fletcher, Coke and Asbury, and several others, who put in a joint claim to the honor of my paternity, although by common consent it now passes in the name of John Wesley,

* This was written in 1852.

my mother's priest, and is so entered upon the family records.

The counsel shows that Methodism has decided its own case against itself.

1st. Because, according to its own testimony, it lacks full 1747 years of being old enough, to heir under the law; and, 2nd, That its descent, instead of being from the honorable lineage of the martyred "Saints" and primitive "witnesses of the truth," is directly the reverse—from the blood of their murderers—the woman clothed in scarlet who put the saints to death, and made herself drunk with their blood, and whose descendants (of whom Methodism declares herself to be one) Christ denominated "*harlots*" and the "*abominations of earth*," and the mother and her family he also called Mystical "*Babylon*."

I am not treating this subject in a light or trifling manner, although the above may excite a smile. No, sir, I would rather move a tear than a smile—a prayer than a laugh. This subject is too grave, too momentous for trifling! it is serious and deplorable as the divisions of Christendom, and fraught with as awful consequences. The half score of antagonistic sects all claiming to be Christian Churches, are intensely engaged making partizans to extend and strengthen themselves by numbers, and thus enlisting the whole world under their hostile banners—for hostile they are, and hostile they must be, because opposite and contradictory, and opposites must antagonize.

Christendom is precipitated into a fierce and deadly conflict; thus presenting to the world the sad and paradoxical spectacle of Christian Churches (admitting the title they claim) divided, and warring against themselves, and if they are indeed of one household "they cannot stand." The friendly alien is astonished and "offended"—sceptics laugh

and devils rejoice! Will America ever become a Christian nation while this state of things continues? But this is not all. This conflict is exported by American missionaries, and imported into heathen lands. The strife for preëminence has already begun there between Baptists and Pedobaptists, and between Pedobaptists themselves. Oriental and occidental breezes waft to our ears the "clash of arms and the clangor of war." Which of these contradictory sects are the heathen to believe, Episcopalians, Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists or Campbellites? Will they ever in great numbers receive the gospel while this state of things continues? Will the world ever believe on Christ until his followers are one, in regeneration of heart and one in church organization? The conflict will never end there until ended here at its source, and it will never end here until these claims to Church legitimacy are settled, and all united upon the original and divine New Testament model, taking the Testament alone for our Liturgy, our Book of Common Prayer and Psalter, our Confession of Faith and our Discipline.

I have instituted the above illustration to elucidate the principles or rules of decision by which I propose to examine the claims put in by your Society, and by which I am willing you should try my own.*

Let me now briefly establish the correctness of the above rules and principles.

I boldly take the position that the Christian Church was *visibly set up* (and consequently, must have had a definite organization, laws, ordinances, &c.) previous to the ascension

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* If any one doubts the existence of a people, holding the principles of Baptists, from the days of John the Baptist until now, let him procure Orchard's Histories, vols. I and II.

of Jesus Christ, and that Churches having an identical structural organism, i. e., character of membership, polity, &c., must have succeeded them, not only through the apostolic period, A. D. 100, but down until the present time. This being true, no existing society is entitled to be called by the name of Christ, (which implies that Christ was the author of its polity,) unless identical in structure and belonging to this illustrious family of gospel Churches.

When was the visible Church of Christ set up, *i. e.*, in what period of the world was it originated and made manifest?

It matters not whether in the family of Adam or Noah, Abraham or at Pentecost, so far as the first objection I urge against the claims of Methodism is concerned. Neither Abraham nor Peter had ever heard of Methodism, or conceived the remotest idea of such a religious system; it commenced, you yourself will confess, three thousand years this side of Abraham, and more than seventeen hundred this side of Peter's time. I answer the question here both to preserve the integrity of my plan and for future reference.

It was not set up in the days of Abraham or David.

1. We find no proclamation of its approach.

2. No intimation of its existence—nothing in the shape of a Christian Institute the least resembling it.

3. God gave to Abraham the promise that "in his seed," [which Paul says meant Christ, who was to arise out of the family of Abraham,] "all the nations of the earth should be blessed," and "his seed should possess the gates of *his* enemies." Here is Christ in promise, and the universality of the kingdom he was to set up "overcoming all his enemies."

4. The Jewish commonwealth was no Christian Church, as Pedobaptists are wont to teach, because that was an imperfect type—a dim shadow of Christ's true Church, and not

the very image. How in the name of reason could it be both type and antitype—the shadow and the reality at the same time! It is to secure grounds for infantile rites that this Judaistic position is urged. How weak a cause that dares to abuse human reason and divine revelation, and address mankind as a race of idiots!

We pass down twelve hundred and sixty-eight years this side of Abraham, and hear the New Covenant from the hallowed lips of Jeremiah, and which Paul, in Heb. viii., declares to be the basis of the Church of the New Dispensation, which came to supercede the old faulty and fleshly covenant upon which rested the Politico-Ecclesiastical system of the Jewish nation. Hear Paul's version of it: "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them he saith, (Jer. xxxi. 31,) "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt, because they continued not in my covenant, and I regard them not saith the Lord: For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord. I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least unto the greatest." God never had a visible people under this covenant previous to the preaching of the Harbinger. Every *proper member in the Christian Church knows God, from the least to the greatest.* Such was the character of every New Testament Church, and such of every gospel Church at the present day.

We pass over many other prophesies until we come to Daniel ii. 44, who prophecies of the setting up of a kingdom by the God of Heaven in the days of the fourth Universal Empire, which all writers admit was the Roman. It had not been in existence previous to Daniel's day, else he would not have spoken of it as to be set up at a period six hundred years in the future.

I pass on down to Malachi, (iii. 1,) (four hundred years before the advent of the Saviour) who foretells his coming as "the messenger of *the covenant*," and promises to send a herald to announce his approach.

I here close the examination of the Old Testament, and find no visible Christian Church set up.

I open the New Covenant. The birth of Jesus is announced, and the voice of his herald is heard. *It is in "the days of the Roman Kings,* or Universal Roman Empire!!!

The new covenant is preached by John and by Christ. John's ministry belonged to, and was a part of Christ's. After the last Passover which he ate with his disciples, he instituted the Supper, (and it seems with it completed the setting up, and setting in order his kingdom). He took wine and said, "this is my blood, by which the *new covenant is ratified.*"—(Bloomfield's version.) His work is now finished. "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do and rise again." No change was made from his ascension until Pentecost, and nothing new was added to a Saviour's finished work upon that day. It only received its world-wide commission, and was endowed with the Spirit's power; and Peter only declared the terms of admission to its blessings, *as he had* previously received them.

But the Church of Christ was to be *unchangeable* and *permanent*, and to perpetuate itself through succeeding Churches, and eventually "fill the whole world."

The prophet Daniel declares this, "the God of Heaven shall set up a kingdom *which shall never be destroyed:* and the kingdom shall not be left to *other people*, [no change in the character of its citizens or members,] and *it shall stand forever.*" Daniel ii. 44.

Christ also asserts the fact, "Upon this rock will I establish my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He did not mean it should not be assailed, but he did mean that it should not be broken up or destroyed—that it should exist, in spite of the malice and rage of hell, and stand through every age as the world's moral lighthouse—a faithful witness of the truth—and, finally, when its wilderness age was passed, should attain to universal empire.

It was upon these plain unmistakable predictions I based my assertions, that the kingdom of Christ has existed entire and unchangeable, as the All-wise Founder finished it, from his day down to the present, and will go on more and still more gloriously, until it shall have redeemed a fallen world, and restored the rescued sceptre of its loyalty to the hands of the Prince of Peace; and hence, every society claiming the title of Christian Church, must prove its identity with the Church at Jerusalem, and to have been so acknowledged during the Apostolic period, *and to have been in existence in all subsequent ages*, free of the blood of the saints.

In the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles, we have the history of the Christian Churches down to the death of John, A. D. 100. But where shall we find their history for a period of 1260 years after? In their history given by Christ, called Revelation, of things which must shortly come to pass.

In the 12th and 13th chapters, we have the history of the rise of the Red Dragon (Pagan Rome), and his conflict with the Church, and of his being cast out- which took place in the

third and fourth centuries—and his subsequent persecution of the saints, v. 11, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their own lives unto the death." That these Saints were not Methodists, you know as well as myself. Such a people were not in existence until 1384 years afterwards!

In the 13th and 14th verses, we read of the flight of the Church, and of her being "*hid*" from her persecutors for "a time and half a time." Could this have been the Methodist Society, sir? Was it ever pursued with death? was it ever *hid* from the face of its persecutors in the wilderness? Has it ever existed for a single day in comparative obscurity? and has Rome ever been made drunk with the blood of its members? Is any portion of its history obscured? By no means. Wesley we know, and Coke and Asbury we know, and every year of its entire, though ever-changing history, for the space of 68 years! It cannot boast of the honors and unmistakable characteristics of Christ's Church—the loss of one drop of blood, a beheaded saint, persecution, a flight, or having been hid from the rage of enemies for a season.

No, Methodism never was persecuted with the sword—it never was compelled to flee, unless it fled from America, in the person of its tory preachers, who escaped to England during the revolutionary war.*

In the 13th chapter, we have the history of the seven headed and ten horned Beast, Papal Rome. 7th v. "And it was given unto him to make war with the *Saints*, and to

* For proof of this fact, I refer to the highest Presbyterian authorities, as well as to the Methodist historians.—See Annan. Musgrave. and Life of Asbury.

overcome them." In the 7th chap., a woman (a professed Church) arrayed in purple and scarlet (kingly attire), and decked with gold and stones, mounts this beast. This woman is the Catholic Church, "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." I here would sit like a child at your feet, and entreat you to answer me the following candid questions:

1. This woman (Popery) is called "the mother of *harlots* and *abominations*." Who are the daughters of the Catholic Church, unless the various Pedobaptist sects? The Lutheran, the Presbyterian, the Episcopalian Churches, are all branches of the Catholic Church—offshoots from it, and the Methodist a branch of the Episcopal. Are not these denominated *harlots* and *abominations* in the above passage? I do not wish to insult you—for the question is a legitimate one, and I am in prayerful earnest. I so decide—I could not, with the stake before me, decide otherwise. I do most conscientiously believe it, and hence my reason as a religious editor and minister of Christ, in refusing to recognize your claims to the will of "Christian Churches," receive your ordinances, or to recognize your preachers as official gospel ministers by inviting them into our pulpits. Am I wrong? If so, I entreat of you to inform my ignorance and illumine my darkness. I will give the proofs and reasons you may offer a most candid and prayerful consideration.

2. Who were the saints and martyrs of Jesus, with whose blood the "Whore" was drunken? They could not have been your brethren, for Rome never shed a drop of Methodist blood!! Methodism, however, unfortunately for its valid title as a legitimate Church of Christ, but fortu-

nately, indeed, to save its blood, was born after this age of martyrdom. *Rome has not killed a Protestant since the birth of Methodism.*

Rome never was drunken with *Protestant* blood!!! The followers of Luther, Calvin, and Henry the VIII., have shed as much Catholic blood as they ever lost by Catholic hands But Presbyterians and Episcopalians have shed Christian blood, and united with the drunken mother to shed Baptist blood, and consequently compose a part of Babylon. Chap. xviii. 24, "And in her (Babylon) was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of *all that were* slain upon the earth," *i. e.*, for the testimony of Jesus. Have not Protestants, in Europe and in England, united with Rome to shed Baptist blood? and have not Presbyterians and Episcopalians stained this "hallowed ground" with the blood, and caused American prisons to groan with the sufferings, of my brethren? These heavens and this earth have been witnesses of our persecutions, wrongs, and bloodshed, suffered at their hands, for the testimony of Jesus—and each drop of that blood will yet arise in heroes to avenge it—by still *more bold and faithful testimony* to his dishonored and sadly perverted truth.

But once more, Rev. vi. 9, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were *slain* for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, that they should rest yet for a little season, *until their fellow-servants* also, and their *brethren that should be* KILLED AS THEY WERE, should be fulfilled."

Whoever these martyrs under the throne were, we are both agreed *they were not Methodists.* Methodism had not

been conceived by Mr. Wesley when these cried! And it is further demonstrable, that no Methodist was ever beheaded for his attachment to the truth; never persecuted to *death* or to *flight* for his religion. He has a chartered privilege—apostacy—to avail himself of in such a case. These were saints, with whose blood, during the long nights of Papal persecution, the scarlet woman was drunken. Those saints were not Pedobaptist Protestants, for they have all (Methodists in their natural mother the Church of England) shed blood, and are included by the Saviour in the term Babylon.

Having shown when the first Christian Church was set up, and its persecutions at the hands of Rome, Papal and Protestant, to continue 1260 years, and the bloody martyrdoms in which every existing Christian Church must have suffered *through its preceding sister Churches* (of which honors your people are deprived,) I now ask, how old is your society? Are you of yesterday, or of apostolic date? I ask Mr. Wesley, and he tells me A. D. 1739, and that it never ought to claim to be a Church, yet fears his followers will make it one. I ask your Discipline, and the four bishops unite in answering me, 1739 as a society, and 1784 as a Church. I ask all your historians, and all, all agree in the above dates. Did any similar organization precede you? No, none. Neither history nor revelation intimates the existence of such a society or polity. The "Wheel within a wheel" never made a revolution upon the sands of time, claiming to be a Church prior to 1784; the world never saw its like before. Truth forces me to decide, sir, that your claim to the title and consideration of a Christian Church is wholly groundless and invalid. Your organization is not old enough by 1747 years! And more than this, the lineage of your society is very obnoxious and repugnant. Why, sir

modesty alone ought to forbid you to claim fellowship with the Churches of Christ; and to the honor of Methodism be it said, it did not for many years presume to such a claim or consideration. According to your own frank admissions, your mother is the Episcopal Church, and this Church is called by Christ a *harlot* and an *abomination*, and your grandmother is the Church of Rome—the great whore and mother of harlots—also called Antichrist, which is the child of that old Serpent, the devil and Satan.

I know these are offensive facts—unwelcome truths—but if the bare mention of them be offensive, how much more their reality? Is not the above your descent, and the above the age of your Methodist Church? If so, we cannot admit your claim, because Methodism is not old enough by more than seventeen centuries.

LETTER III.

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth."—Rev. xiii. 11.

The system of Methodism cannot justly claim to be a Church of Christ, because of human origin—an invention of men.

Dear Sir:—Were you asked if the economy of the Christian Church is of divine origin and appointment, you, in common with every other Christian, would answer, most emphatically, yes. Nor would you recall the decision to qualify it, unless the ruin it brought upon your own system of church organization might occur to you. That the Church of Christ is of *divine origin*, and, as a visible Christian institute, was set up at a definite time in the Christian era, every sect on earth feel forced to admit. Why, sir, in what light would a Protestant Christian be regarded in our day, who held and taught that the Christian Church was merely a human institution—a man-invented society or organization, like the institutions of Odd Fellowship and Masonry, and like them, subject to all the modifications of man's ever fluctuating and capricious fancy! Would not Christendom unite in a holy crusade against the sentiment? Would not Christians regard such a doctrine as degrading the Church, and depreciating Church relationship to a level with membership in those societies?

Now, Methodism, considered as a church or a society, is purely and clearly of *human origin* and device, and of a *very recent date*,—indeed, it cannot boast of as an illustrious a founder as Masonry, nor of as high antiquity, by some thousands of years. Solomon is claimed (I do not pretend to say it,) as the inventor of Masonry, and the cause of its organization, the building of the Temple; while John Wesley, *when an unconverted man*, is the boasted founder of Methodism, and the cause of *its* being organized into a Church was the *Revolutionary war!!*

Masonry has equal, yea, far superior claims to Methodism, to assume the title, and demand the regard and consideration of a Church of Christ; and this cause, i. e., its *human origin*, constitutes my second objection to accord to Methodism the title and regard of Christian Church.

My position may, and doubtless will be regarded by some unreflecting minds, as uncharitable in the extreme. But charity rejoices in the *truth*, and, I ask you, sir, and every candid man, to detect a flaw in the reasoning that forces me to this conclusion. *Hate, if you will, but hear me.* If Methodism is a mere human contrivance or "*scheme*," (for so some of your first writers have denominated it,) as are the above-named institutions, then, this fact of itself, decides that it can lay no claims to the regard and authority of a Christian Church, superior to them. Methodism may do good, and so do they,—many Methodists may be good men and Christians, and so are many Masons and Odd Fellows. Many sinners may have been converted under preachers in Methodist societies, and so have many sinners been converted under ministers who are members of Masonic and Odd Fellows' lodges, but bear it in mind, that neither *Masonry* nor *Methodism* ever saved or ever will save a soul.

If a stream cannot rise higher than its source, then I cannot

impart that of which I am not myself possessed. No more can a man clothe an institution or religious system of his own creation with authority superior to that of which he is himself possessed. The days of inspiration have passed, consequently one man has as good a right to invent a religious system as another, and to gain supporters to it as another has to his, and so each man, or each dozen men, might invent a dozen new "Churches," but each Church would possess no more authority or sanctity than the man himself possessed—and to repudiate these Churches would only be rejecting the works and *inventions of men.* For Christians to support such inventions or religious schemes, and observe the traditions and commandments of men for religious duties, is to be the followers and servants, yea, worshippers of men, for we are the servants of those whom we *obey*, and the worshippers of him whom we *serve.* Man has most violently felt the force of this in all ages. Those who have arbitrarily given laws, civil or religious, to communities or nations, have either been inspired as Moses, or have pretended to be so, as did Minos, Lycurgus, Numa, Mahommet, down to Ann Lee and Joe Smith, &c., "because," as said Milton, "they wisely forethought that men would never quietly submit to such a discipline, as had not more of God's hand in it than man's." Do not all monarchs and despots claim a "divine right" to rule?

Indeed, was revelation silent as the grave upon the question, our reason, the intuitive convictions of our consciences, our sense of the moral fitness of things would decide the question beyond appeal. The arguments they, one and all, bring up, are weighty and conclusive, that the discipline or government of the Church of Christ is of *divine appointment.*

(1.) Because it is the most important of all the externals of the Church or religion.

No one thing so determines the destiny of a nation or community as its government. A good government will conduct a nation to prosperity, and secure the welfare and happiness of its subjects,—while a bad one will sooner or later overwhelm it in ruin, and entail wretchedness and woe. Nothing, more than the laws and regulations of a society concerns and influences a people's happiness and well-being. No nation or community can be truly prosperous with an ill-regulated government. Well said the immortal Milton "Some do not think it for the ease of their inconsequent opinions, to grant that church discipline is platformed in the Bible, but that it is left to the discretion of men. To this conceit of theirs I answer, that *it is both unsound and untrue ;* for there is not that thing in the world of more grave and urgent importance throughout the whole life of man, than is discipline. What need I instance ? He that hath read with judgment, of nations and communities, of cities and camps, of peace and war, sea and land, will readily agree that the flourishing and decaying of all civil societies, all the movements and turnings of human occasions, are moved to and fro as upon the axle of discipline."*

You will admit, sir, that the unity of all Christians, in faith and practice, is of the highest importance, since the world will never be persuaded to believe the gospel until Christians are one, (see Christ's prayer, John xvii.) Now a diversity of *adverse* forms of Church organizations separates Christians, and this engenders strifes, discord, emulation and hatred. They become identified in feeling and interest with the peculiar form of polity they have selected, and they are tempted to resort to all means to preserve it, promote its extension, and to resist the encroachments of a different one,

* Milton's Works, page 29.

and thus these diverse forms of Church polity precipitate all Christendom into a fierce and deadly antagonism. This state of things will never improve, infidelity be driven from the world, nor the heathen receive the gospel, until Christians "see eye to eye and speak the same thing," and there is but "ONE FOLD and one shepherd." Now if Christ left the form of church polity to the discretion of man, one man or society of Christians has an equal right to frame a polity as another, and as each will see something to mend, we will, in the course of time, see as many different churches as there are ambitious men, able to draw off a party. It is this horrible God-dishonoring and Christ-rejecting doctrine that has already given birth to the 640 sects that have arisen, and is now stands forth, offering a free charter and encouragement, saying to unhallowed ambition that covets self-aggrandizement and notoriety, "You can found a church, and fix places of honor, authority, rule or profit for yourself and co-adjutors!"

2. If Christ appointed any of the externals of his church, we are compelled to conclude he fixed *the most important.* To say he did not is to impeach his wisdom.

The government of his Church is the most important of all externals, from every conceivable consideration. He must then have appointed it, by giving principles that would determine it, or giving a pattern of government in an organized body.

3. It would be not only an impeachment of his wisdom, to suppose he left that part of his Church to be devised by man, which if badly devised, would prove the subversion of his whole design, but it would reflect upon his goodness. "How can we believe that God would leave his frail and feeble, though not less beloved Church here below, to the perpetual stumble of conjecture and disturbance in this our

dark voyage, without the card and compass of discipline?"*

4. Such a supposition would make Christ a less desirable and less faithful lawgiver than Moses! and Paul tells us he was more faithful.† Did not God charge Moses to make every part of the old tabernacle, which was only a shadow of the new and true house, according to the heavenly pattern, and is the glorious and really true house left to be shaped and patterned according to the thousand varying fancies of men, and like Methodism, subject to be changed by every General Conference?

Well said Milton, when he lifted his warning voice against the Episcopal Church framers of his day, "Did God take such delight in measuring out the pillars, arches and doors of a material temple? Was he so punctual and circumspect in lavars, altars and sacrifices, soon after to be abrogated, lest any of these should have been made contrary to his mind? Is not a far more perfect work, more agreeable to his perfections in the most perfect state of the Church militant, the new alliance of God to man."‡ "God never intended to leave the government of his Church, delineated here, to be patched afterwards and varnished over with the devices and embellishings of man's imagination." No, the beneficent Saviour left this work not to the inventions or desecrations of men nor angels, but came down himself "to set up his kingdom," and not only published the principles of its constitution, but gave an example, and when leaving, solemnly charged his disciples, and through them his ministers in all ages, to see it, that they taught his followers to "observe all things whatsoever he *had* commanded," and this forbids the observance in religion or the Church, of any thing he has not commanded!

* Milton, page 29. † See Heb iii. 2, 4. ‡ Milton, page 30.

5. The government must of necessity be a definite character to promote the highest welfare and happiness of the membership. All governments do not do this equally. All governments, save one, actually destroy the very inalienable rights with which the God of nature endowed man, and thus contravene the wisdom of God in man's creation. Who, better than God, knows the character of government that would be the best and certainly calculated to secure the greatest good of his children?

6. No man, or class of men, has the wisdom and prescience to devise such a government. It, of necessity, should partake of the character of the doctrines of religion—it needs to be a perfect one, and who but God is equal to this work? Let the history of human governments illustrate the weakness and inability of man to devise governments or organizations that have the strength to endure, and at the same time respect all the natural rights of man.

7. If left to men, they would devise it so as to promote their own ends. Where is there an organization framed by men, civil or religious in which places of distinction, power or emolument, are not found? Look at Monarchism, Episcopacy and Presbyterianism. What do we see? Kings, bishops and ruling elders, superior orders, lording it over God's children and Christ's heritage. They have made "*right* and *left* hand seats," because they wished to occupy them. "Of what excellency and necessity then Church discipline is, how far beyond the faculty of man to frame, and how dangerous to be left to man's inventions, who would be every foot turning it to sinister ends; how properly also it is the work of God as father, and of Christ as husband of the Church."*

* Milton's Works, Reason of Church Government, page 31.

8. If the government of the Church is left for the clergy, or any set of men to frame, then Christ put it in the power of men to oppress his children. They might, even *unintentionally*, frame a polity that would prove oppressive.

9. Such a power delegated to ministers, would tend to foster their pride, and inflate them with the idea of their superiority to their brethren.

10. If given to one man or class of men, it concedes the fact that there are superior and inferior classes or orders in the Church—those who determine the laws of the Church, and its regulations and practices, giving rites and ceremonies, &c.; and it would teach that there are Rabbis, i. e., authoritative "teachers" or "masters" in the Church.

11. Where, in the New Testament, has Christ or his apostles specified the person or persons who are to do this all important work? Whom has he empowered to determine the discipline, make and change laws for his kingdom? Angels might as well presume to fix the laws that regulate the worship of the Church of the first-born in heaven, as Ministers, Bishops or Popes, to make and change the laws of Christ's kingdom on earth! Your own Bascom has well said, "The right of deciding what are the will and mind of God, in matters of faith and *discipline*, by prescriptive interpretation, is conceded in the Scriptures to no man or body of men, exclusively."* Bishop Bascom in this solitary passage, drives a dagger, through and through, the very vitals of Methodism. Does not a body of Methodist clergy—the General Conference, claim the right, exclusively, to interpret, and even legislate proscriptively, "matters of faith and discipline," for Methodism? Where then do you get your authority for your proscriptive interpretation and legislation, if

* Declaration of Rights, Art. 17.

not from Christ? *From John Wesley?* How dare the General Conference change, add to, and take from the statute book of Jesus Christ—and the law book of his church and kingdom, every four years, if they do indeed consider the Methodist Episcopal Society the Church, or a part of the kingdom of Christ, and the Discipline its laws and polity? What insolent presumption! What daring impiety!! That discipline, and history, is a dark mountain of condemnation to Methodism!!

12. My twelfth argument is: Man seems instinctively impressed that the disciplinary laws of the Church which command his implicit obedience, on pain of his exclusion, are, and of right ought to be, as divinely appointed as baptism and the supper.

If the impression on every man's conscience is any proof of the existence of a God, (and all writers use the argument,) it is equally in proof of the Divine appointment of Church discipline.

13. But supposing the organization, discipline, laws, &c., of any given Church were of man's invention and enactment, no man could submit to them without serving man and rejecting Christ.

14. Finally and conclusively. If the visible organization of the Christian Church is of man's device, then it is not only of no moment what that form may be, but it is not necessary that there should be *one at all!* Admit it to be man's work, then like all his other creations it is his creature—it belongs to him, and he has a perfect right to do with it as he pleases—it is subject to his own caprices, he can change its form, every year, or abolish it altogether. Each religious society now in existence, has as good a right to abolish its present polity as it had to create it, and suppose all should abolish their forms to-day, there would be no visible

Church in the world, so far as they compose it. It is their privilege, whenever it is their pleasure, to do so. God has no where commanded them to make governments for him, and he no where forbids them, but rather every where commands them, to abolish their traditions.

Do you feel prepared to advocate the legitimate consequences of *Pedobaptistic* positions upon this point? What are they? If Christ gave no principles to be observed, and no directions, but left it open for all to satisfy their likings in Church making, then any man or *woman* may at any time invent and set up a society with a polity and discipline, yea, and membership too, to suit their fancy, and call it a Church of Christ, and call upon you, sir, to acknowledge it as such, *and to commune with it*, and, as you are a warm advocate for open communion, you could not object!!

LETTER IV.

An important principle—the Church of Christ is of Divine origin—founded by Christ in the days of the Cæsars—Methodism, by John Wesley in the days of George III.

DEAR SIR:—I will here lay down one single proposition, sustained by the plainest and most unmistakable declarations of Christ, upon which I rest the whole discussion.

PROPOSITION: If Christ gave no commandment how his Churches were to be governed, and his followers disciplined —if he gave no form of Church polity for our observance as Churches, then it would be Heaven-daring impiety in any man to presume to devise a form of polity, and teach and enjoin it upon Christians to observe!!

The proof of the above is the last charge of Christ to his disciples, Matt. xxviii. 20, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I HAVE commanded you." Here is a specific law. It enjoins the teaching of a *specific class* of commands. That class is, all things that Christ himself had previously commanded, and of course nothing else. This forbade their teaching the commands of Moses or Elias, of Abraham or David, unless Christ himself had taught them also. It is a fundamental principle of our common law, that where one thing is specified, every other thing is for

bidden. "*Expressio unius est exclusio alterius.*" *The specification of one thing is the exclusion of every thing else.* This principle is the most important one in the civil code. It is well established and admitted throughout the civilized world. Nothing could be determined in law without it. Let us illustrate it by a few passages of scriptural examples. In the commission, Christ commands them to preach the "*gospel.*" This forbade them to preach the *ceremonial law*, or any thing but the gospel, for salvation. He told them to baptize "into the name of the *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Spirit.*" This specification positively forbade them to baptize into *any other name*, as Shem, Ham and Japheth. "He that *believeth* and is baptized." This as positively binds and limits baptism to the *believer* alone, *because* HE IS THE ONLY CHARACTER MENTIONED IN CONNECTION WITH BAPTISM. So, "teaching them to observe whatsoever *I have commanded*," imperatively limits the teachings of the apostles, and Christ's ministers in every age, to what Christ had commanded at that time—previous to his ascension. I rest the whole controversy of Church-making on this one passage, and appeal to the bar of Tennessee for the *soundness* of my reasoning. This is the great law, governing Church *discipline* and polity. This is our "rocky Gibraltar," and we defy the combined attack of Popes Catholic and Popes Protestant. We challenge them all, big popes and little popes, scarlet cardinals, pompous prelates, grave benches of ruling elders, and solemn Methodist Conferences, with Pio Nono of Rome, and the Archbishop of Canterbury of London, at their head, to gainsay the above proposition, or evade the prohibitory feature of this law—and if they cannot, they are ruined—their organizations are all unscriptural and ANTICHRISTIAN! We challenge contradiction! That minister or bishop who teaches the observance of a solitary law, or "thing" which Christ did

not command, and binds it upon the Church of Christ, violates this plain and solemn injunction, and tramples the authority of Jesus Christ under his feet!

Reject this wise provision, this restrictive law of Christ, and you open wide a door and invite man within the temple for trade and traffic, and to do with it as he pleases. You offer a temptation to every designing and ambitious man and *woman*, as I have said above, to divide and distract christendom with their parties and new-fangled churches, which they have invented and organized their followers into. Break down this barrier to human pride, ambition, and presumption, and you are compelled to place human authority upon the same footing with Scripture. Yes, sir, I would be as much bound to observe *your* laws and traditions which you, in conjunction with your fellow bishops, have commanded in your testament and discipline, as I would be to obey Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles! Would you like this? It would flatter the pride of your heart; it is natural for man to love authority and power. Some one has said, "each man has a Pope in his own bosom." But, sir, on the other hand, you would be as religiously bound to obey me as your Saviour, and would you like this as well? And will you presume to say that I have not as good a right to invent a church as John Wesley had, or as Coke and Asbury had? I most certainly have, as has any man in America!

The authority of Christ has been most wickedly profaned in this respect. Men, and gentle woman, in her misguided zeal, have set the authority of Christ at bold defiance, and founded societies almost "*ad infinitum*," which they claim to be veritable and authoritative Churches of Christ. Some of them continue unto this day, and demand of us our homage and fellowship. I would as soon worship the great image that Nebuchadnezzar set up! What honor and credit for

distinguished piety do the followers of these founders ascribe to the originators of new sects, though their hands may be clotted with Christian blood, or blackened with the ashes of the martyrs of Jesus Christ, which they have scattered upon the waters or cast to the winds for their unfaltering testimony *against them*. Luther and Calvin, and Henry VIII., protestant *saints*, and yet the *murderers of saints!*

If to found a new sect is an evidence of superior piety, protestants cast the apostles far in the shade. We find no record in the New Testament, or in the history of the first ages, of Peterites or Paulites, nor even did Mary, the mother of Jesus, found a church and call it by her name. They loved the Saviour too well to disobey his commands. But shortly after the death of the last apostle the wicked work of church-building began, Miss Quintilla leading the way. Nor was she the last woman who aspired to this honor. Miss Ann Lee, of Toad Lane, and Lady Huntingdon, organized Churches (?) which are even now existing. Are their disciples the followers of Christ, or of poor misguided women? But, sir, who shall decide which of the past or recent human "schemes" of church organization is most authoritative and deserving the most regard, that of Luther, Zwingle, or Casper Schwenkfield?—that of Henry VIII., Calvin, George Fox, or Count Zinzendorf?—that of John Wesley, John Irvin, or William Otterbein?—that of Bill Miller, Joe Smith, A. Campbell, or Jesse Furgerson? Are they not, one and all, (though they were composed of pious Christians) *human* institutions, and Antichristian, because opposed to Christ's authority, and the rivals of his Church, as he organized it? Have I not as good authority to start a new and differently organized Church as had Calvin or John Wesley? And would it not be as *pious* in me as in them to do so? The time is coming, and almost "now is," when this Church and sect-making business

will be regarded as partaking of the boldest principle of Antichrist, and these protestant Church "schemes," as belonging to Mystical Babylon, the daughter of the "Man of Sin." Understand me, sir, I am repudiating a principle and its products, not Christians. There may be multitudes of Christians in these human institutions, yet this fact does not make these societies Churches of Christ. There are Christians in Babylon and it is Babylon still—a cage of every unclean bird and hateful thing. Every member of a *Bible Society* might be a Christian, and yet that would not make the society a Church. We will quote, though it is unnecessary, additional authority to prove that the economy of the Christian Church is of heaven and not of man, for he who will not hear Christ will not hear the Prophets. Dan. ii. 44. "In the days of these kings;" kings of the fourth universal empire, not of England—the Cæsars—not the Georges, "SHALL THE GOD OF HEAVEN, (not Luther or Calvin, Wesley or Campbell,) SET UP A KINGDOM which shall *never be destroyed*,"—this kingdom must have been something *visible* and *tangible*—a distinct organization—otherwise it could not have been seen or assaulted, or been liable to destruction—"but it shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and stand forever." Unless it had a visible organization, it could not oppose visible and literal organizations. If the kingdoms broken were visible, so is the "stone" or kingdom set up by the God of heaven. It was a *kingdom* that was set up, and there can be no kingdom without some sort of government and organization—it would be an *anarchy*. But the GOD OF HEAVEN was to "set it up," not man, and therefore not Calvin or Wesley. Do you say "he did it through man's instrumentality?" I deny it. Proof.—"Thou sawest till that a *stone* was cut out WITHOUT HANDS." Dan. ii. 34. "Forasmuch as thou sawest that the *stone* was cut out of the

mountain *without hands*." Dan. ii. 43. I understand that this "stone" was not the work of man's device; God was its author. Do you grant it, and yet claim that he inspired men to do it? If so it will not relieve your society of its human origin, for you would be compelled to go back to the days of INSPIRED MEN, and this was seventeen centuries before Wesley's day.

But the "stone" was to roll upon the image, not in fifty disruptured fragments, one piece upon the image and the rest against each other, doing more harm to each other than to the "image," as Christendom is now doing, if you call all existing religious societies true churches. I wish to call your special attention to one difficulty which it becomes you to review. This "stone" was to smite the feet of the image and break them in pieces, and afterwards to destroy the whole image. How is the Church to break in pieces the monarchisms of earth? Not with the sword, literal or physical force, for her weapons are not carnal. How then can those iron monarchies be overthrown by moral force? Let us notice that the feet and legs of this image are composed of iron mixed with mirey clay, two substances God never made to unite. Of what two elements are the despotisms of the Italian and European States composed? Church and State—answering to the clay and iron, elements God never intended to unite. What is the cement that now unites them? Answer: Infant sprinkling. The influence of the Church of Christ is to dissolve this cement, and then the iron and clay will part and crumble. When the feet and legs are broken, the image must fall easily—so when the ten monarchies of Europe shall have fallen and given place to democracy or republics, absoluteism in the whole world will soon cease.

Now, sir, if Episcopal Methodism, (or any Pedobaptist society) is the Church, it can never do this work. Can it

make war upon infant baptism, and practice the rite itself? Can it by the influence of its example and teaching destroy despotism when it is a huge clerical despotism itself? As well might you set Satan to cast out Satan!! Are the various Pedobaptist societies, together, this Church—this "stone?" How can they all increase and fill the whole earth? Methodism could not fill Tennessee without swallowing up all other churches, and so of others, only one of all the existing societies can possibly be this *stone*, and no Pedobaptist society alone, or the aggregate of them all, can constitute this stone, for they cannot perform the work it does, possessing as they do the very elements of the image! It was the mission of Christ to "cut out" this stone—to set up this kingdom—to make the new covenant—to ratify it, and upon it to establish his Church so firmly, that the gates of hell could not destroy it. The Christian Church he did organize, taught its doctrines—appointed its ordinances and determined its polity or discipline, and left the solemn warning to his disciples to teach, in all time to come, the observance only of what *he had himself* taught them.

I do not claim that all the principles of church organization and discipline are taught in any one chapter, but like all the doctrines of faith, scattered promiscuously through the whole Testament. We must gather and embody them as we do other doctrines.

That I am not singular in this view, I quote your own late brother and bishop, Bascom. "The New Testament furnishes the PRINCIPLES, but not the form of church government: and in the adaptation of forms to these principles, Christian bodies should be governed mainly by the facts and precedents furnished in the apostolic writings. The will and mind of the Great Head of the Church, on this subject, so far as clearly revea.ed, whether by express statute or fair impli-

cation, *cannot be contravened without impiety.*"* This I fully endorse, since the principles of government always and *ever must determine the form.* To prove this I only need to quote another sentiment from Mr. Bascom. "The assumption, that absolute power in the affairs of church government is a sacred deposit in the hands of the ministry, [as the Methodist clergy teach and preach,] LIBELS THE GENIUS AND CHARITIES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT!"†

I quote the authority of a learned Episcopalian. "There is no part of the ecclesiastical system which is not faintly traced in the Scriptures, and no part which is much more than faintly traced!"‡ This, though a *faint* admission, is powerful and conclusive, considering it is from an Episcopalian Pedobaptist. We might quote columns, but we close with Milton.

"Church government *is prescribed* in the gospel, and to say otherwise is unsound."§

"As therefore it is unsound to say that God hath not appointed any set [i. e. definite or particular] government in his Church, *so it is untrue.*"‖

"Thus, through all periods and changes of the Church, it hath been proved that God hath still reserved *to himself* the right of enacting church government."¶

Now, I ask, how can it be accounted for, that the different sects of Pedobaptists from Rome down, contend that church government, discipline, rites and ceremonies, are not defi-

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* Declaration of Rights, Art. 9.

† Declaration of Rights, Art. 10, quoted by A. Stephens, in his Church Polity, published by the Methodist Book Concern, N. Y.

‡ Tract No. 8, or Oxford series.

§ Milton's Complete Works, London edition, page 29.

‖ Reasons of Church Government, chapter 11, page 31.

¶ Reasons of Church Government, page 32.

nitely determined in the Testament, while Baptists invariably contend that they are, unless it is that Pedobaptists are conscious their systems and practice are not countenanced by Christ and his Apostles, while Baptists are fully conscious, and *boldly confident*, that their church polity and practices are fully warranted? Can you answer it otherwise with any show of reason?

We here conclude the difference between Methodism and the Church of Christ. The latter "is from above," is of divine origin—cut out without human hands—built by Christ, commenced in the days of the Cæsars—has continued unchanged—and will stand forever—the Gilead of its district and the Pharos of the world: while Methodism is justly represented under the form of a two horned beast, (see Rev. xiii.,) because it is a despotism—possessing temporal and spiritual power with horns like a *lamb*, the emblem of innocence, because this power is exercised by the *clergy* who ought to be Lamb-like—as coming up out of the earth," because it was originated by man, (and an *unregenerated* man at that)—had its first commencement in the days of George the III., and is an Iron Wheel of clerical despotism, libelling the genius and charities of Christianity, (if Bascom be right,) as it crushes and obliterates the dearest rights of God's creatures and Christ's freemen. Think of this chapter, reader, think of it well.

LETTER V.

Christ forbade his disciples to teach the observance of any thing he had not taught them—Admission of Dr. Bangs—Methodism a human invention; proved by Bishop Soule's own words, by Wesley and Methodist writers generally—is the grand-daughter of Rome—the grand-child of the "Man of Sin," and Son of perdition!! the Churches of Christ cannot fellowship it, or receive any of its acts.

Dear Sir:—In my last, one point at least was most conclusively and unanswerably settled, that Christ gave to the kingdom he set up, the Church he built, a definite form of organization—its government or discipline, and that if he did not, it would have been a palpable violation of his last charge to them, for the apostles to have invented Churches or any visible society, or enforced the observance of any regulations, laws or discipline. The law of Christ was specific. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever *I have commanded you.*" This most positively forbade them to teach or enjoin upon Churches they might gather, the observance of any thing Christ had not taught or commanded them, the Apostles, to teach, previous to his giving the commission. If reason, revelation, or the principles of civil law can determine any thing, this point is determined. To overturn this, is to overturn the principles of all language. If it

is urged that the Holy Spirit taught the Apostles what instructions to give the Churches, I reply, he was "only to *guide* them into all truth, for he shall not *speak of himself* but whatsoever *he shall hear*, that shall he speak." The Spirit was not to be an independent teacher, he was to speak nothing of himself, but was to guide them into all truth. How? (See John iv. 26.) But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and *bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*" He enabled the Apostles to recall to mind all the teachings of Christ. We might add, that no one but the head of the Church has a right to *direct or govern it.* The Pope claims to be the head of the Catholic Church—the ruling monarch of England the head of the Episcopal—the General Conference of the Methodist E. Church, and consequently they have a right to govern them as they please; but Christ is head over all things to his Church, and none but Christ has a right to govern his Church by arbitrary dictation—it would be daring impiety for them to do it; they may govern their human "schemes" if they will, but let them not presume to meddle with the Church of Christ. Again, no one but the legitimate lawgiver of a kingdom has authority to make laws for that kingdom. Christ is the only lawgiver in Zion, and no one but himself has a right to make laws for his churches. It would be high treason against the government of Jesus Christ, for any one person or body of men, to arrogate to themselves the authority to make and change laws in the kingdom of Christ—it is the boldest act, and characteristic of Antichrist, to do this. I conclude this subject with an admission of Dr. N. Bangs,* who says, "It is allowed Christ

* Original Church of Christ, page 87.

and his Apostles did put the Churches under some form of government or other." If they did, I ask you, I ask every candid man, did they not put all the Churches under the *same* form of government, and the *same* laws? No sane man will deny it. They did not organize one a monarchy, another a despotism, another an executive democracy, and another a clerical aristocracy. If not, then only one of all the existing sects can be considered as the Church of Christ. That the Methodist E. Church is of purely *human origin*, and *very recent date*, I now wish to show from yourself, in connection with your brother Bishops, from John Wesley, and Methodist historians generally. Indeed, no one claims that it is anything but a human device and invention, but some of your writers make the originators almost *inspired men*, as we shall see *raised up of God and sent to devise it!!*

JOSHUA SOULE, and *three other Bishops*, "We think it expedient to give you a brief account of the rise of Methodism, both in Europe and America. In 1729, two young men, in England, reading the Bible, saw that they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it and incited others to do so. In 1737, they saw, likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified; but still holiness was their object. *God then thrust them out to raise up a holy people!!*

"We esteem it our duty and privilege most earnestly to recommend *you*, as members of *our* Church, *our form* of Discipline which has been founded on the experience of a long series of years; as also on the observation and remarks we have made on ancient and modern Churches."*

METHODIST DISCIPLINE.—"In consequence of this our venerable friend, who, under God, had been the FATHER OF THE GREAT REVIVAL of religion now extending over the

* Methodist Discipline page 9.

earth, by means of the Methodists, determined to ordain ministers for America, and for this purpose, in the year 1784, sent over three regularly ordained clergy, but *preferring* the Episcopal mode of government to any other, he set apart," &c.*

From these three extracts we learn:

(1.) That Methodism was organized by two young men, (unconverted too,) in the year 1729.

In the second extract, the Bishops do not claim that Methodism is founded on the Scriptures, but simply on human wisdom, and observation, on the experience of a long series of years, as also on the observation and remarks they themselves have made on ancient and modern Churches!" A singular and *sandy foundation.*

In the last we have the admission that Wesley was the father of Methodism, that the Methodist Societies were organized into a Church, and so called first, A. D. 1784, just 68 years ago, and while Methodist Societies in England have never yet been organized into a Church or so called! We also learn an important fact, that the only reason the Methodist E. Church is Episcopal, rather than Republican, is, not because the word of God was consulted or cared for in the matter, but simply because it is claimed—*not proven* —that Mr. Wesley "*preferred*" it!!

I might quote extensively from Wesley's Works, to prove that he was the father of Methodism, did not all Methodists admit the fact and boast of it?

Isaac Taylor, in his work, "Wesley and Methodism," page 199, says, "Wesleyanism is a *scheme*—it is the product of *uninspired intelligence*, and therefore has its defects."

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* Methodist Discipline, page 12.

Page 214. "But Wesleyanism is the *work of man*, * * it is open to the freest *scrutiny*.

"Dr. Coke arrived in New York on the 3d of Nov. 1784, and on the 25th of December following, the General Conference assembled at Baltimore, *at which time the Methodist E. Church was organized*."—Dr. Bangs' Original Church, page 26.

"Methodism has, from the beginning, been, in a most striking manner, the *child of Providence*. Nearly all its peculiar characteristics were adopted, without any previous design, on the part of the instruments by whose agency it was brought into organized existence, as circumstances seemed to require, and without expectation of their becoming elements in a permanent ecclesiastical constitution."—Dr. HINKLE, in *Platform of Methodism*.

This only claims that the Methodist E. Church came into existence by sheer accident.

The Christian Church was organized by Jesus Christ—Methodism by *accident*—mere happen-so.

METHODISM, by J. H. INSKIP, a work widely endorsed by the Methodist press. "As a *creature of Providence*, Methodism, in her peculiar external organization, has adapted herself to the exigences of the times, * * and hence though *constantly changing*, yet, like the modifications through which the human system passes, in the various stages of its development, she has always maintained her identity entire."—*Introduction*.

"It is but a little more than 100 years since the first Methodist society was formed by Mr. Wesley in England. The M. E. Church *has not been in existence 70 years*."—Page 53.

"Finally, it may be said, Methodism in England and America was a *special system*. *It originated* in as dark

and unpropitious a period almost as ever known in the history of Protestant Christianity.

"To meet the emergency, which then existed, God raised up a company of great men—men who were great in intellectual endowment, moral excellence, and *inventive genius* There was John Wesley, who has justly been designated the greatest of ecclesiastical legislators—Whitefield, the most extraordinary of pulpit orators—Charles Wesley, among the best of sacred poets—Coke, the leader of modern missionaries—Asbury, the most laborious of Bishops—and Clark and Benson, one of the most learned, the other the best practical commentator ever known. THESE MEN DEVISED THIS POWERFUL INSTRUMENTALITY, WELL STYLED, "*Christianity in earnest, i. e.* Methodism.

Here the fact is distinctly asserted, that John Wesley, the Moses, and Charles Wesley, Coke, and Asbury, the Aarons of Methodist Israel, did *devise the system of Methodism.* It is then of *men,* and "*came up out of the earth.*" It is even by the best of Methodists acknowledged as an *imperfect and defective system.*

Says Inskip, "a more wise or better arranged system of religious and moral enterprise, could not have been conceived. Of course, like *all other* HUMAN INSTITUTIONS IT HAS ITS DEFECTS AND IMPERFECTIONS.—Page 65.

We might proceed with our proofs, but let these suffice. Such is Methodism as it is presented to us by its warm friends and admirers—*an imperfect, defective, human institution,* only a little over 100 years old—and not one of its apostles, ministers, or members presumed to call it a Church until 70 years ago! Who then calls upon me to fall down and worship this great worldly image that Wesley set up, and acknowledge and regard and fellowship it as the Church of Christ, the ground and pillar of the truth? Who will pre-

sume to call upon Christians to forsake the Church "set up" and "built" by Jesus Christ, a perfect pattern of which we find in his word, to support, instead, an "*imperfect*," "*defective*," *rickety* "scheme," invented by one John Wesley, priest in one of the branches of the *apostate Churches* of Rome? Had the Church of Christ been destroyed, and the model lost, that God was compelled to raise up Wesley to originate a new *scheme?* or had the Church of Christ proved *inefficient* and a failure, that it was necessary for the wisdom and "*inventive* genius" of Wesley to be called upon to save the world by devising a new and unheard of scheme of church government? Would not each position be blasphemous? And do not Methodist writers virtually plead this, when seeking an apology for the appearance of Methodism, and thus exalt Wesley's system over Christ's system of church organization? *They do*, "in many respects *the best most efficient* form of church government *known in the world. A more wise* or *better arranged* system of religious and moral enterprise, could not have been conceived."—*Inskip.* "The design of Providence in raising up the preachers called Methodists, their missions was not to form *any new sect* [but they did!!]; but to reform the continent, particularly the *Church*—and to spread scriptural holiness over these lands." —*Inskip.*

Here it is boldly asserted that Providence raised up Methodists to reform the Church—the Church of Christ, of course—it having become corrupt and a failure—and how reform it but to remodel it after the counsel of their own *inventive genius?* If Wesley did this, did he not assume and use powers and authority the apostle attributes to Antichrist — thinking to change times, laws, and ordinances? That the defects of the apostolic Church organization, and its failure to accomplish the end purposed by it, it boldly pleads

as an apology for Methodism. Hear *Isaac Taylor:* "No man was more devoutly observant of the authority of holy Scripture than Wesley; but his understanding was as practical in its tendencies as his piety was sincere. He *perfectly felt*, whether or not he defined that conviction in words, that an apostolic Church—although right to a pin—*which did not subserve its main purpose—the spread of the gospel and the conversion of the ungodly must be regarded as an* ABSURDITY, and a *hindrance to truth.* What is the chaff to the wheat?—"What are wholesome and scriptural usages and orders, which leave Christianity to die away within an inclosure?"

Again:

"It [Methodism] originated in as dark and unpropitious a period, almost, as ever known in the history of Protestant Christianity. Immorality, heresy, and spiritual death had gained a spiritual ascendancy when it was instituted. To meet the emergency which then existed, God raised up a company of great men, &c.; *these men devised this powerful instrumentality,*" i. e. Methodism.—*Inskip*, pp. 54, 55.

What is more clearly taught here than that the Christian Church had become *effete* and powerless for good—that the gates of hell had prevailed over it—that it was *illy devised* and unfit to meet the wants of the world, and having signally failed, when all was lost, and there was no eye to pity or arm to bring salvation, help was laid upon one John Wesley, priest of one of the daughters of the scarlet woman!! Beautiful system—Satan casting out Satan. Rome persecuting and opposing herself!!

I say here the fact is clearly intimated, that Wesley regarded the apostolic Church organization as *inefficient* and useless, and consequently rejected it as "*an absurdity*, and a *hindrance to the truth* leaving Christianity to die away. What an epitaph for frail man to write upon the work of Christ and his Apos-

tles!! He then mapped out of his own brain a religious scheme—Church system — to supersede it to accomplish what that could not—thus assuming more than Christly prerogatives, since he rejected the authority and work of Christ, and set up a human organization to be the *rival* and *antagonist* of Christ's Church! Methodism, then, seems to have been originated a rival of, and designed to supplant the apostolic pattern of Church organization, and its workings from its birth until the present, are all directly and palpably to this end! How then can a follower of Christ encourage it, or enlist under its rival banners? Are not such the followers of men? Even Methodists so regard themselves—the followers of John Wesley! Methodist Societies are called by Methodist writers, very properly, "Mr. Wesley's Societies," and "Methodist Societies," not Churches of Christ.

He would not have turned any of the nobility away if they had sought admission into *his classes*."—*Inskip.*

"The fact, that few of the higher classes joined *Mr. Wesley's societies*," &c.—*Inskip.*

"The policy of John Wesley, and *his fellow-laborers and sons* in the gospel."—*Inskip.*

"You are the elder brother of the American Methodists; *I am, under God, the father of the whole family*."—*John Wesley, in letter to Asbury.*

Here Wesley claims a divine right to create and rule Methodists, *under God;* i. e., *jure divino.*

"Our design is to show, that it is our duty as ministers of Christ, and THE SUCCESSORS of the apostles and of John Wesley," &c.—*Inskip.*

Methodist ministers the successors of the *apostles and John Wesley!!*

"The first regular conference was held in Philadelphia, June, 1773. From the record of their proceedings, it ap-

pears there were in connection at that time ten ministers and 1600 members. At this conference the authority of Mr. Wesley, and the doctrine and discipline of the Methodists, were formally recognized and adopted."—*Inskip.*

And this recognition has never been revoked! What is this but a human society, and what were these preachers but the servants and followers of a man, when they formally acknowledged Wesley's authority, and pledged themselves to obey his book of laws, (the Discipline,) in *both faith and practice?* A Christian Church acknowledges the authority of Christ alone, and the doctrine and discipline of the New Testament.

Hence Methodists are very properly denominated, by their writers, "*the followers of Mr. Wesley.*" "And such has been the course almost uniformly pursued by *the followers of Wesley.*"—*Inskip*, p. 39. *Et cum mul. al.*

"The whole body of Methodists knowing this, and acknowledging Mr. Wesley as their spiritual *father* and *founder*, would receive from him what they could not with *any justice* or *propriety* from any one else."—*Dr. Bang's Orig. Ch.* p. 99.

"As Mr. Wesley, under God, was the *founder* of the Methodist Societies, and the expounder of Methodist theology, so was he the ORIGINATOR of much that is peculiar to the ecclesiastical polity of all the different branches of the great Methodist body in all parts of the world."—*Gorrie's His. Meth.*, p. 217, the latest Methodist historian.

Notice, Mr. Wesley, it is claimed, instituted two forms of church government, one in England and one in America.

But the crowning presumption of Methodists is, after having freely admitted that Charles and John Wesley originated and devised the whole Methodist scheme, they impiously

claim that they did it by *inspiration*, or at least by *divine right and authority*.

Wesley himself has set his people an example, "*God then thrust them out to raise* a holy people."—*Wesley*. See Discipline, p. 7.

"We believe that God's design in raising up the preachers called Methodists."—*The four Bishops*. See Discipline, p. 8.

"Methodism," says Inskip, "is a creature of *Providence*." What does he mean by Providence—chance? If, not he means of *divine origin*.

"They were guided by the admonitions of Providence."—*Inskip*, page 52. Were these admonitions of the *spirit*? Then it was *inspiration!* Mr. Inskip explains this providence of God on another page, as under the immediate direction of the Spirit. Then the Methodist Discipline is as much inspired as the New Testament, and the acts of Methodist preachers as the acts of the apostles!

But it is insisted upon that the Wesleys and their apostles were in some way *inspired*, and acted under divine warrant. "To meet the emergency which then existed, God raised up a company of men," &c.—*Inskip*, p. 54.

"When it pleased God to *raise up* Wesley, only about two or three incidental forms of aggressive action were to be found in the Protestant Churches. He was *providentially* [i. e., under the immediate direction of the Spirit, is the impression made by Methodist writers] led to introduce an arrangement," &c.—*Inskip*, p. 169.

I have, in the last five letters, candidly, and as inoffensively as possible, laid before you my reasons for refusing to regard and fellowship your "religious scheme" as the Church of Christ. I have shown that his Church was organized in his day, and has stood unchanged and indestructible until the present, and will continue the same, unreformed,

until the end of time; while the Church of which you are a partial head, came into being only 68 years ago, and no organization like it ever existed before! I have shown what every Christian believes, that the Church of Christ is of divine origin; Christ its author, its head, and its law-giver; while . have proved, from your own words, as well as those of Wesley and your writers, no one denying, but all boasting, that John Wesley was your spiritual father and founder, and your Methodism a human scheme of man's device and invention—a man-made institution—as much so as that of Odd Fellowship or Masonry—an imperfect and defective organ ization. How can a Christian man dare to fellowship it as a scriptural body, much less prefer it to the Church as organized by our blessed Saviour? It is a rival of Christ's fold, and those who enter it leave Christ to follow men—become the followers of Wesley and the servants of the General Conference. Methodism is a *sect*, not of the Apostolic Church, but of the Roman Apostacy; having the Church of England for its mother, and the woman in scarlet for its grandmother.

If it is necessary for a Church to have valid ordinances and ordinations, in what light must we regard the baptisms and ordinations of Methodist ministers? They have one and all received their ordinations and authority from Rome—mystical Babylon, the "Man of Sin" and son of perdition, through the Church of England!! Methodism, from its own testimony, belongs to the family of mystical Babylon, a granddaughter, and can the Churches of Christ, with any degree of right and propriety, recognize, by receiving, the acts of mystical Babylon as Christian or scriptural. Baptists have refused to receive her baptisms for 1400 years, and have suffered cruel martyrdoms on account of it, and shall we, their descendants basely betray those blood-sealed and life

attested principles for fear, not of prisons and death, but the impious scoffs and derision of those who oppose them? Shall we now, without either a stake or a prison in view, repudiate the principles and practices of our martyred ancestors, by recognizing the man-called, (for it is evident that God never called any man to preach *Methodism*,) man-made preachers of your human societies, by inviting them into our pulpits, and thus virtually saying to the world, "These are Christ's ministers, hear ye them, when they are only Mr. Wesley's preachers?" You cannot expect the reflecting and consistent of my brethren to act thus.

In my next, I will show how Methodist societies were made churches, and that Methodist *Episcopacy* was surreptitiously introduced, and, understood in a prelatical sense, or as equal to the episcopacy of the Church of England, is both spurious and invalid, and if not, its assumptions are indeed ridiculous and contemptible.

LETTER VI.

Methodism an accident—The first chapter of the Discipline reviewed—Its statements at variance with facts—Methodists who trust to it are deceived—Mr. Wesley was opposed to Episcopacy—Did not believe in three orders.

DEAR SIR:—Having proved in my last, by Methodist writers, that your system of Methodism is purely of human invention; I might also have added, an *accidental institution.* We quote from "Church Polity," by Rev. A. Stevens, published by your Book-Concern:

"The Methodist economy was not a *contrived system.* It was the result of *providential circumstances.*"—p. 83.

"The arrangements and regulations thus ACCIDENTALLY, or rather *providentially*, provided, gradually grew permanent, and formed the government of the SECT."

"Thus societies, classes, chapels, lay preachers, itinerants conferences, minutes, or the discipline, successively and providentially [i. e., accidentally] entered into the system of Methodism. At the *head* of this system stood Wesley, gladly acknowledged by the increasing thousands of his followers as the FOUNDER and RIGHTFUL DIRECTOR of the whole."—p. 85.

Dr. Stevens frankly owns that Methodism came into being in parts, and by *accident*—and that it all belonged to

Wesley, who was the rightful DIRECTOR and DICTATOR of it according to his own sovereign pleasure.

How can you ask Christians to recognize, regard, and fellowship it as a Church of Christ, when it was neither organized nor set up by Christ?

Since writing my last, I have seen the last number of the North British Review, containing a review of Mr. Taylor's late and last work, entitled "Wesley and Methodism." Mr. Taylor's work is spoken of in terms of the highest commendation. The reviewer, on every point, most fully asserts and corroborates the position I have taken with regard to the worldly character of the Methodist organization—and it is of itself sufficient to show the light in which it is viewed by historians, reviewers, and indeed by every reflecting mind.

"The plans and arrangements of Wesley were, in their general character, quite warrantable and competent, and as he did not profess to proclaim or impose them as a part of the scripturally determined constitution of the Church, they ought to be judged of as *human expedients*, just by their fitness to promote, temporarily or permanently, the interests of true religion."

"Human wisdom is incompetent to devise permanent arrangements adapted to all times and circumstances. Divine wisdom alone is adequate to, and we enjoy the guidance of divine wisdom in this matter, only, in so far as the constitution and arrangements of the Church or Christian Society have been determined in Scripture, and in so far as we have rightly understood and applied the indications given us in these, of the way in which the Christian religion is to be promoted."

"Wesley did not profess to be organizing a Church upon a scriptural basis. *His Institute* [Methodism] was the product of his own wisdom and sagacity, and must be subject to the

fluctuations and instability of all merely *human* things."—*North British Review.*

"It is certain that Wesley originally did not wish or intend his Institute to be a distinct Church, but merely a supplement or appendage to the Church of England. * * * The people who joined him he wished to remain still members of the established Church, to attend upon her worship, and to receive sealing ordinances in her communion. He did not intend to form a distinct or separate Church, and in point of fact did not do so."—*Taylor.*

"Wesley does not appear to have ever investigated the question, What is the scriptural organization of the Church? with the view and for the purpose of bringing the conclusions he might be led to form upon this subject, to bear upon the regulations of his Institute."—*Taylor.*

"In treating of Wesleyan Methodism, 'as a *hierarchy* or *scheme* of spiritual government,' Mr. Taylor brings out some very important views in regard to the fundamental principle of organization, which vests the whole real control of the society in the ministers, and excludes the Church and people from any recognized or effective influence in the management of its affairs. We quite agree with him in thinking that such a constituted arrangement is *utterly indefensible* in theory, and that though somewhat modified in practice, it must operate *injuriously* upon the *permanent influence* of the body."—*North British Review.*

In addition to the above testimony, my eye has just fallen upon the following from the pen of the editor of one of your Conference papers, the *Memphis Methodist Advocate.*

"The archetype of Methodism is the character of *its founder.* He [Wesley] was a man of but one aim, and to this every thought and effort converged."

"How blessed is Method'sm, to have originated (humanly

speaking) from such an author. She never need to fear for her safety or prosperity, while she wears the mantle of such a *prophet.*" I would say, How *more blessed* to have originated with Jesus Christ, and how much less to fear did she wear the mantle of such a Prophet!!

In view of the mass of authority I have produced, showing that Methodism is of man—a worldly scheme—a human expedient—a man-devised society—am I not warranted in saying, without laying myself open to the charge of illiberality or bigotry, that for the organization of Methodism as a scriptural Church I have no more *Christian* fellowship or regard than for that of Masonry or Odd Fellowship? Am I not sustained in calling upon you to withdraw your claims to be considered and called a Church of Christ, and take upon you the name your founder gave you, and wished you to be called—a *Society*—religious, if you please—a "Religious Society?" Would not this act do much to soften the prejudices and opposition which your arrogant and unscriptural Church pretensions have awakened in the minds of considerate Christians?

I now leave the fortuitous origin of Methodism, and devote this letter to the examination of the fictitious character of the first chapter of your Discipline, which you and your fellow-bishops have endorsed and sent out to the world.

It is admitted by all that the published histories and documents of a community are open to examination, and subject to the freest criticism. Between the first chapter of your Discipline and the facts furnished in your published histories, and the writings of Mr. Wesley, I can but decide there is a very great discrepancy—one, if continued longer without a satisfactory explanation, must be looked upon as a culpable and *designed misrepresentation* to mislead the people. I give the chapter at length.

"The preachers and members of our society in general, being convinced that there was a great deficiency of vital religion in the Church of England in America, and being in many places destitute of the Christian sacraments, as several of the clergy had forsaken their churches, requested the late Rev. *John Wesley* to take such measures, in his wisdom and prudence, as would afford them suitable relief in their distress.

"In consequence of this, our venerable friend, who, under God, had been the father of the great revival of religion now extending over the earth, by the means of the Methodists, determined to ordain ministers for America; and for this purpose, in the year 1784, sent over three regularly ordained clergy; but preferring the Episcopal mode of Church Government to any other, (1) he solemnly set apart, by the imposition of his hands and prayer, one of them, viz., *Thomas Coke*, Doctor of Civil Law, late of Jesus College, in the University of Oxford, and a Presbyter of the Church of England, for the Episcopal office; (2) and having delivered to him letters of Episcopal orders, (3) commissioned and directed him to set apart *Francis Asbury*, then general assistant of the Methodist Society in America, for the same Episcopal office; (4) he, the said *Francis Asbury*, being first ordained deacon and elder. In consequence of which the said *Francis Asbury* was solemnly set apart for the said Episcopal office (5) by prayer, and the imposition of the hands of the said *Thomas Coke*, other regularly ordained ministers assisting in the sacred ceremony. At which time the General Conference, held at Baltimore, *did unanimously receive the said Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, as their Bishops, being fully satisfied of the validity of their Episcopal ordination.*" (6) *Dis. ch.* 1, *Sec.* 1.

Now, as the present Episcopal form of government of the

Methodist E. Church is not made to rest upon the word of God—nor even expediency—but the alleged authority and appointment of John Wesley, its venerable "father and founder," I would suppose it would be considered a matter of the first importance to Methodists to know whether, in deed and in truth, Mr. Wesley did "*prefer* the Episcopal form of government," and ordain Dr. Coke an Episcopal Bishop—a minister of the *third* order, and if he did commission and direct Coke to ordain Mr. Asbury for the same office—if the General Conference did *unanimously receive Coke and Asbury as their bishops*—and also, if Messrs. Coke and Asbury WERE FULLY SATISFIED WITH THEIR EPISCOPAL ORDINATIONS.

It may be asked by some of your brethren, What does it matter whether these things were so or not, and why should it concern me to enquire? I answer, *Episcopal Methodism* is one of the existing sects which stands claimant to the title and regard of a Church of Christ. It calls upon me, and the denomination of which I am a member, to fellowship it—to receive it as a gospel Church at the Lord's Supper, and its ministers into our pulpits as our religious teachers—and it calls upon my relatives and friends, and the world, for whose well and right doing it is my pleasure and my duty to watch and labor, to enter its societies, and obey its rules, and support its laws and practices; and I cannot grant its requests, nor can Baptists accede to its arrogant demands, nor can I advise my friends or the world to enter its folds. But does the matter stop here? No. I am held up before the world, as are my brethren and Church, for public reproach—made a hissing and a scorn by its thousands of circuit riders—the travelling *police* of Methodism—before their congregations in every city, village and hamlet, from one end of the land to the other. Baptists are pronounced

sectarian bigots, illiberal and uncharitable; and all the bitterest and most violent prejudices of the world arrayed against us, because we cannot conscientiously so regard and fellowship "Mr. Wesley's scheme" and its ministers. Is it not, then, proper and right that I should give my reason, and the reasons which I understand govern my brethren in their course?

But more than this—It becomes me, and every other faithful friend and servant of Jesus Christ, to aid in bringing about the answer to his prayer, that his followers might all be one—that the world might believe on his name. Many, very many, who in their hearts are his warm and ardent friends, I most charitably believe, are this day found in the fold Mr. Wesley set up a few years ago, and they are enlisted under his banner, advocating with a blind and misguided zeal, the Episcopal form of government, honestly believing, because they see it so stated in the Discipline, that Mr. Wesley considered it scriptural, and therefore organized his Churches accordingly. If this is all false, I shall undeceive these Christians, and save them from the advocacy of a known, palpable, and unscriptural error before the world —and have thrown down one of the barriers that divide professing Christians. Will not this be something, and ought not my honest, though humble efforts, to correct the errors of Methodists, command and secure their warmest attachment? I have been attempting to correct the errors they advocate for several years past, and while I have secured the friendship and warmest Christian regards of hundreds, yet the masses, through the influence of their press and spiritual rulers, have been taught to look upon me as their enemy. Why should it be so? Do they hate the truth? That I have told them the truth, I appeal to yourself. I lay all my positions before you—I ask you not to

reply, unless to correct me. If I am correct, your silence will be sufficient, and it will be understood by all, since that "*silence gives consent,*" is an universal *proverb* and *principle.*

1. Mr. Wesley did not consider the Episcopal Form of Government Scriptural, if he did prefer it.

We understand by Episcopacy, three separate and distinct orders in the ministry, and that of bishops as the third order, possessing a *divine right* to overrule all. Now, Mr. Wesley did not believe that the Scriptures warranted *three orders* of ministers, but believed as Baptists and Presbyterians, that bishops, elders, or presbyters, were of the *same order.* In his Works, vol. vii. p. 311, he says, "Lord King's account of the Primitive Church convinced me, *many years ago*, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain."

This is a full and frank confession, and if his convictions are correct, the claims of a Methodist or Episcopal bishop are unscriptural and most *arrogant!* Did Mr. Wesley ordain an Episcopal bishop, with this conviction?

See also his Notes on the Gospel, written at the close of his life:

Acts i. 20. And his "*bishopric,*" he renders *apostleship.*

In Phillippians i. 1. In his notes on bishops, he says, "The word bishops here includes all the *presbyters* at Phillippi, as well as the *ruling presbyters;* the names bishop and presbyter, or elder, being *promiscuously used in the first ages!!*

Did Mr. Wesley, in the face of this, solemnly ordain Mr. Coke an Episcopal bishop, an order of ministry he believed neither found *in*, nor warranted *by*, God's word?

"But that it (Episcopacy) is prescribed in scripture, I do not believe. This opinion, which I once zealously espoused, I have been ashamed of ever since I read Bishop Stilling-

fleet's 'Irenicon.' I think he has unanswerably proved that 'neither Christ nor his apostles prescribe any particular form of Church government; *and that the plea of divine right for diocesan Episcopacy was never heard of in the primitive Church.*'"—*Wesley's Works*, vol. 7.

Who would suppose, then, while Wesley was in his senses, that he would lay his hands on Dr. Coke, and in the name of the Holy Trinity make a diocesan bishop of him? If Wesley ordained Coke a bishop, he used the service of the Church of England. He must then have put this question to him:

"Are you persuaded that you are truly called to this ministration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ?"

And Coke answered, "I am so persuaded."

And yet Mr. Wesley firmly believed at the same time that the office of a diocesan bishop was not itself according to the will of Christ! If I were a Methodist, and especially were I in your place, I never would insist upon so unreasonable and preposterous a thing as that Wesley ordained Coke a bishop, or designed for a diocesan bishop to be countenanced by Methodists. He said he shuddered when he heard that Coke had assumed the name! He said he had rather be called a *knave* than a bishop, as you are called, and require your people to call you.

II. Did Mr. Wesley ordain or leave such an order in his society in England?

Not a vestige of it—nor are Methodists in England *Episcopal* but *Wesleyan* Methodists, i. e., they carry out Mr. W.'s views of government. Did Mr. Wesley, then, ordain a bishop, and prefer Episcopacy?

LETTER VII.

The first Chapter of the Discipline wholly untrue—Methodists are deceived who believe it—Methodist History and John Wesley against it—John Wesley did not believe an Episcopal bishop a Scriptural Order in the Ministry—He himself would prefer to be called a knave, rascal, or scoundrel than bishop—The direct testimony of Bishop Bascom, D. D.

Dear Sir:—Having shown in my last that Mr. Wesley frankly admitted that he did not believe that the Scriptures warranted three orders of ministers, or that such a minister as an Episcopal bishop was known in Paul's day, or among the primitive churches for centuries after Christ, how in the name of reason or consistency can Methodists—could the writers of the first chapter of the Discipline say, that Mr. Wesley preferred an Episcopal Government.

That he considered it without a scriptural warrant, we have seen above, and that he considered the powers claimed by prelatical bishops as positively anti-scriptural, we have seen from his Notes on the New Testament. Is there a Methodist in America who believes that Mr. Wesley was capable of preferring an *unscriptural* and *anti-scriptural* form of church government for his people, to a scriptural one? Can a Methodist believe that Mr. Wesley ever appointed the

office for the ordination of a bishop found in the Discipline, in which this is the first question, "Are you persuaded that *you are truly called to this ministration*, ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST?" Did Mr. Wesley demand an affirmative answer to this question from Dr. Coke when he ordained him? Could he believe that Dr. Coke could have been called to the office of a prelatical bishop according to the will and mind of Jesus Christ, when Mr. Wesley had declared that it was his firm conviction that Christ never had a "will" or wish for such an officer in his Church?

We not only have no proof in all his works, that he preferred the Episcopal government, except his remaining a member of the Church of England, and save this fact, unless he appointed the Episcopacy for Methodism in America, we have the fullest evidence that he had strong objections to the third order of bishops. When Mr. Wesley learned that Mr. Asbury and Coke had established an Episcopal form of government in the United States, he addressed Mr. A. the following very pointed letter (See *Wesley's Works*, vol. vii. page 187, Letter to Asbury):

"LONDON, *Sept. 20th*, 1788.

"There is, indeed, a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans, and the relation wherein I stand to all the *Methodists*. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists; I am, under God, *the father of the whole family*. (Will Methodists deny that John Wesley was their father, and are they not then *his* children and followers?) Therefore, I naturally care for you all, in a manner no other person can do. Therefore, I, in a measure, provide for you all; for the supplies which Dr. Coke provides for you he could not provide were it not for me—

were it not, that I not only permit him to collect, but also support him in so doing.

"But in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid the Doctor and you differ from me. I study to be *little*, you study to be *great;* I *creep*, you *strut* along. I found a *school*, you a *college*. Nay, and call it after your own names! O, beware! Do not seek to be *something!* Let me be nothing, and Christ be all in all.

"One instance of this, of your greatness, has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called a bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought. Men may call *me* a *knave*, or a *fool*, a *rascal*, a *scoundrel*, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me a *bishop!* For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better.

"Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart, and let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely I am your affectionate

"Friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Can a friend to Wesley believe that he preferred the Episcopal form of government, and yet looked upon its chief order, which makes it Episcopal, in such a light? Can any Methodist, who does not regard Mr. Wesley as a *double-dealer*, believe that he ordained Mr. Coke an *Episcopal bishop*, and directed him to ordain Mr. Asbury, and because they allowed themselves to be so called, chastise them in such language as the above; language which, in these days of equality, a Christian man would scorn to use or receive? With the above letter, together with Mr. Wesley's express conviction, that an Episcopal bishop was an unscriptural

order or office, and the first chapter of the Discipline before me, what am I, and what must every Methodist who is in the least susceptible of the force of truth, compelled to conclude? Am I not justifiable in deciding that the first chapter of the discipline is a tissue of falsehoods, or Mr. Wesley was a moral knave and a hypocrite? This imperiously demands a notice at your hands. You, sir, have endorsed this chapter with your own "sign manual," and sent it forth as an item of the faith of half a million of Methodists. Mr. Wesley was not the author of the chapter—it matters not who else was; you, sir, have endorsed it, and it becomes you to substantiate it, when its statements are challenged, *unless you regard it as indefensible.*

But there is still another declaration which I also pronounce false, upon the authority of the standard histories of the society. It is the last clause of the chapter. "*At which time* the General Conference held at Baltimore, did UNANIMOUSLY receive the said T. Coke and Francis Asbury as their *bishops*, being fully satisfied with the validity of their Episcopal ordination."

Now so far as this being true, every line of it, as it is on my sheet, is according to the authorities before me, and one of them your own distinguished associate, Bishop Bascom, utterly untrue.

The General Conference did not *at that time*, (i. e. the year they were ordained and sent over, or the year the Methodist Episcopal church was organized) receive Messrs. Coke and Asbury as *bishops;* they did not admit the title until 1787—THREE YEARS AFTER! Nor did the Conference at first, *or three years after*, apply the title of *bishops* to them, either *unanimously* or *at all.* They assumed the title in 1787, and inserted it in the minutes without the consent of Conference—and at the next meeting begged it might stand.

Here is the history of the SURREPTITIOUS introduction and origin of Methodist bishops. (See Musgrave, page 43.)

"In the course of this year," (1787, or three years after the organization of the Methodist *Episcopal* Church,) Mr. Asbury reprinted the General Minutes; but in a different form from what they were before. The title of this pamphlet was as follows:

"'A form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America,' &c.

"In this discipline, there were thirty-one sections, and sixty-three questions, with answers to them all.

"The third question in the second section, and the answer, read thus:

"'Q. Is there any other business to be done in Conference?'

"'A. The electing and ordaining of bishops, elders, and deacons.'

"This was the first time that our superintendents ever gave themselves the title of bishops in the minutes. THEY CHANGED THE TITLE THEMSELVES WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE CONFERENCE; and at the next Conference they asked the preachers if the word *bishop* might stand in the minutes; seeing that it was a Scripture name, and the meaning of the word *bishop*, was the same with that of superintendent."[!!!]

"Some of the preachers," continues Mr. Lee, "opposed the alteration, and wished to retain the former title; but a majority of the preachers agreed to let the word *bishop* remain; and in the annual minutes for the next year, the first question is, 'Who are the bishops of our church for the United Stated?"—*Lee's "Short History," &c., page* 127.

With this history before me, I do not hesitate to say with McCaine, Jennings, and others, that Methodist Episcopacy was introduced *surreptitiously*, by unlawful and dishonorable means.

Nor was "Conference fully satisfied" with Coke and Asbury's "Episcopal ordination," if the other preachers were as dissatisfied with it as was Coke himself, who had his from the hands of the "father" and "founder" himself—and Mr. C. was of the decided impression that they desired a reördination, or at least were willing to submit to it, from the hands of Episcopal bishops! What will Methodists think when they learn that this *Bishop* Coke addressed a humiliating letter to Bishop White of the Protestant Episcopal Church, requesting, I may say, begging, for valid Episcopal ordination at his hands!! He says in that letter, "He, (Mr. Wesley) did indeed solemnly invest me, *so far as he had the right so to do, with Episcopal authority*, but did not intend, I think, that our entire separation should take place. * * Our ordained ministers will not, ought not, to give up their right of administering the sacraments, I don't think the generality of them, perhaps *none of them, would refuse to submit to a reördination*, if other hindrances (a classical education) were removed out of the way!!"* This letter, which Mr. Asbury very properly asked Bishop White to "*burn*," unless he complied with his requests, is given, with one from Mr. White, in "History and Mystery of Methodism," pp. 24–27. Bishop White refused his request, and eight years after, Dr. Coke applied to the Bishop of London, requesting him to ordain a given number of preachers to travel through the connection in England, for the purpose of administering the sacraments agreeably to the usages of the Established Church.—Why should Dr. Coke request Episcopal ordination of Bishop White, if he was satisfied? Why did he say that perhaps all the other preachers would be reördained, if he would waive their ignorance? Why did Dr. Coke eight years after,

* Drew's Life of Coke, page 288, quoted from McCaine by Musgrave.

seek ordination for a number of his preachers from the Bishop of London, if he was satisfied that he himself was possessed of Episcopal powers?! Why did he not ordain them himself, since, if a bishop, he had equal authority with the Bishop of London? These facts speak too plainly—Mr. Coke knew and felt he was not a bishop, but he so coveted the honor, that he gave himself the name by fraudulently assuming the title, and at the next Conference begged that it might remain, urging that a superintendent and bishop were one and the same! Why did he not claim the title upon the ground that Mr. WESLEY HAD ORDAINED HIM A BISHOP? He knew that Mr. W. did not, and had not the power to, ordain him an Episcopal bishop.

IV. MR. WESLEY'S LETTER TO HIS SOCIETIES IN AMERICA IS EVIDENCE AGAINST THE TRUTH OF THIS CHAPTER.

He says: "I have appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in America." The word bishop is not once mentioned.

V. MR. COKE'S CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION IS ALSO EVIDENCE.

It reads: "I have this day set apart as a *superintendent*, by the imposition of my hands and prayer," &c. Not one word about bishop.

Finally: Neither Mr. Coke's letter nor the letter Mr. W. wrote, by him, to the brethren in America, mention that Mr. Wesley instructed or empowered Dr. Coke to ordain Mr. Asbury an Episcopal bishop, but Mr. Wesley distinctly says in the quotation I have given, that he himself had appointed Messrs. Coke and Asbury *joint superintendents.*

The points which we have shown to be contrary to facts are:

1. That Mr. Wesley preferred the episcopacy—he did not believe in three orders of ministers.

2. That he did ordain Dr. Coke an Episcopal bishop of the third order.

3. That Mr. Wesley commissioned Dr. Coke to ordain Mr. Asbury an Episcopal bishop. Mr. W. says he ordained Messrs. Coke and Asbury himself "*joint superintendents.*"

4. That Asbury was ordained an Episcopal bishop.

5. That "at which time [1784,"] the General Conference, held at Baltimore did *unanimously* receive them as bishops —they did not dare assume the title until *three years afterwards.*

6. The General Conference, did not receive them as *bishops,*—Coke and Asbury assumed the title, and moved by ambition *surreptitiously* changed the term superintendents into bishops.

7. The Conference, when besought by these self-made bishops to allow the title to stand, were not unanimous, and never have been—a portion of the more reflecting, informed and consistent are not to this day satisfied.

8. The Conference, if Mr. Coke is a fair representative of it, was not "*fully*" satisfied with their Episcopal ordination, for Mr. Coke was not satisfied with his own!

9. Mr. Wesley did not deliver Dr. Coke letters of Episcopal ordination—only a certificate of *sub*-superintendency.

10. Nor did Mr. Wesley recommend Episcopacy to American Methodists, as is implied in this chapter, so far as can be learned from his writings. Mr. Wesley states in his letter, by Mr. Coke, to Methodists in America, "As our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the State and from the ENGLISH HIERARCHY, (Mr. Wesley here calls the English episcopacy a *hierarchy;* would not Methodist episcopacy be a Methodist hierarchy?) *we dare not entangle them again with either one or the other;*" Will Methodists say he did it by this same letter?!!

"They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church," and this, as we have seen, according to Mr. Wesley's views, would never have entangled them in a hierarchy—never would have furnished them with an Episcopal bishop. Did Mr. Wesley, in recommending them to pattern after the Scriptures and the primitive Church, indicate that he preferred or recommended an Episcopacy?

If my language and assertions respecting this first chapter are considered unwarrantably bold and reckless, we invite the especial attention of all Methodists to the following testimony of the late distinguished Bishop H. Bascom, D.D. That this is unquestionably the language of Bishop Bascom, I quote from Dr. Bond's Economy of Methodism, published by the Methodist Book Concern, 200 Mulberry st., N. Y.*

"If we can credit Mr. Wesley's declarations, it was never intended that the Methodists should become an *ecclesiastical establishment, headed by an episcopal hierarchy*, consisting of an indefinite number of incumbents, all possessing the same powers and ruling the same diocese. The model for such a state of things is not to be met with in the whole range of church history, *except when four individuals at the same time claimed by divine right the chair of popedom in the Roman See.* If the reader is startled at this, let him recollect that things that are alike in their nature and progress will be compared

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* I am preparing for the press one of the most remarkable, and, against the Methodist Hierarchy, the most potential little work ever offered to the world. It is the famous Declaration of Rights drawn up by Dr. Bascom, together with his inimitable essays upon the despotic and tyrannical charater of Methodism, of which the above quotations are specimens. The friends of a republican Christianity should give this little work a wide circulation—it is the greatest argument, in the least space and cheapest form, ever published. The title is The Little Iron Wheel. Price 40 cts.—J. R. G.

by the human mind, and classed accordingly."—*Bond's Economy of Methodism*, pp. 113, 114.

"But Mr. Wesley seems not to have contemplated an episcopacy in any shape. It is, to be sure, asserted, in the preface to our Book of Discipline; but the oldest preachers in the United States, with whom I have conversed and corresponded on this subject, never saw the warrant. It has been called for by friends and foes for thirty years, but is not yet forthcoming. If such warrant exists, why is it that we can learn nothing about it?"—*Ibid.*, p. 114.

"But until such document or warrant from Mr. Wesley be produced, *I, as an individual, must, of necessity, continue to doubt the historical probity of the preface to our Book of Discipline*, in relation to this particular."—*Ibid.*

"What had Wesleyan Methodism to do with our self created and self-styled Episcopacy? For, I repeat it, Dr. Coke was only set apart as a superintendent of the American Methodists, and not ordained to a third office as a prelatical bishop. The ceremony of separation was only intended to confer Mr. Wesley's authority to oversee the American Methodists upon another, as Mr. Wesley could not attend to them in person. What did original Methodism know of our order of presiding elders?—one man having power to appoint seventy, to overrule and remove at pleasure fourteen hundred? Where in the annals of original Methodism did the framers of our Discipline meet with the ceremony of ordination for a bishop?"—*Ibid.*

"The improvements proposed in our present form of government are openly denounced as 'innovations.' This is somewhat singular, when every man of information knows that our whole system of episcopacy in the United States is, to all intents and purposes, an 'innovation' upon the genius and plans of Wesleyan Methodism, and one ex

pressly disapproved and disavowed by Mr. Wesley."—*Ibid.* p. 114.

"On the other hand, if our bishops and their pertinacious supporters as high-toned Episcopalians, ill as it may look (for such they really are), would yield and distribute throughout the different departments of the Church that part of their power that has come into their hands 'SURREPTITIOUSLY,' it would abate the honest inquietude of thousands, it would remove the just apprehensions of the discerning, and bring worthy multitudes into the bosom of the Methodist Church, whose names, as things now are, will never adorn our calendar."—*Ibid.*, p. 115.

"4th. From the preceding facts it appears, that the introduction of Episcopacy among the Methodists in the United States, so far from being 'recommended' by Mr. Wesley, was expressly disapproved and forbidden, and the proceedings of the General Conference of 1784, in establishing *diocesan* Episcopacy among us, was in open violation of the instructions of Mr. Wesley; and I now take the liberty of saying to the Rev. William M'Kendree, Enoch George, Robert R. Roberts, Joshua Soule, and Elijah Hedding, that a statement on this subject, to which I find their names subscribed, in the preface to our Book of Discipline, is believed by *many* TO BE A PERVERSION OF HISTORICAL FACT, and they are hereby publicly called upon to furnish some *evidence* of the truth of the aforesaid statement; or leave us to infer that such evidence cannot be produced. In justice, however, to these distinguished individuals in the Methodist Episcopal Church, I would say distinctly, I believe they are all innocent of having made this statement originally, but they have made it their *own*, by giving it the sanction of their names, as I have not been able to learn that this preface has ever been sanctioned by any General Conference: if it *has*, upon learning it

I shall make (should God preserve my life) a similar call on the next General Conference, as the proper organ of information: at present the bishops appear to be the *only* responsible persons, and on *them I call.* Should the policy of the cabinet induce them to remain silent, as heretofore on similar occasions, I shall take the liberty of thinking they cannot answer me, without damage to their own cause, which, it would seem, must be supported by *silence.* 5th. As it is in proof before the reader that Methodist Episcopacy can derive no support from the *name* or *sanction* of Mr. Wesley, *both* having been *definitely* withheld, so also does it admit of proof that the great body of Methodist ministers and members in the United States were not *consulted* at all in the adoption of this enormously mis-shapen system of aristocratic government. It was the *undivulged* project, the favorite scheme of a few master spirits, who, meeting in secret conclave and excluding the junior members even of their own body (as living witnesses declare), acknowledging no constitutional rights, and comprehending no legislative privileges as belonging to any except themselves, proceeded to the *hasty* formation of the present plan of government among us, *and unblushingly palmed it upon posterity as the offspring of Mr. Wesley's wisdom and experience.* 6th. The SPURIOUS origin of Methodist Episcopacy, is to be inferred from the fact that those very individuals who made these pretensions were unsettled, and felt misgivings on the subject.

"Dr. Coke, in a letter to Bishop White of Philadelphia, *doubts* the power of Mr. Wesley to confer legitimate episcopal authority; he does the same in a letter to the Bishop of London, written subsequently, in both of which he *modestly* asks for reordination."—*Ibid.*, p. 117.

"In the present preface to our Book of Discipline, the adoption of our present form of government is attributed to

the express instructions of Mr. Wesley; but the venerable Wesley has, unequivocally, *disavowed* the honor, and no one has ever shown or quoted the document, paper, or verbal instructions of Mr. Wesley. It is now nearly a year since all our bishops were *respectfully* invited to furnish information on this subject, if they had any to furnish; they have not even deigned a reply of any kind: passing by the *uncourteousness* of such an act, and the insult it offers to the wishes of inquiring thousands, who, it is *known* to the bishops, feel a deep interest in the subject, I shall plead their apology, by taking it for granted that they *would* have replied if they had been able to do so, without *defacing* the beauty of those institutions 'received from their fathers,' many of whom are *still living;* or, perhaps, like the Chinese historians, they are unacquainted with their own *origin*, because their *living* fathers *conceal it.*

"But finally, Mr. Asbury pleads his authority as a Methodist bishop, on the following grounds: '1st, Divine authority. 2d, Seniority in America. 3d, Election of the General Conference, 1784. 4th, Ordination of Coke, Otterbine, Whatcoat, and Vasey. 5th, Because the signs of the apostle were found in him.' See Asbury's Journal for May, 1805, vol iii., page 191. No 'succession' directly hinted at here, no allusion to Mr. Wesley. On this *expose* of the *arcana* of Methodist Episcopacy, I would only say: it is plain Mr. Asbury is here speaking of himself as a bishop of the third order, and superior to presbyters. Of his 'divine authority' we can say nothing, only we know it was not received from the Scriptures. As to 'seniority' we have yet to learn that it ever creates any *new* civil or religious rights. With regard to the vote of the 'General Conference' electing Mr. Asbury, it is only necessary to observe, they might have acted unadvisedly in this vote of the Conference of 1784 as well as in

others; and we know that *many* of the acts of that very Conference have been since *repealed*, as improper and disadvantageous. On the subject of 'ordination,' as it was only an ordination by presbyters, we cannot admit its 'episcopal validity,' if more be meant than a presbyter. As it respects the last item, the signs of an apostle can only be seen *in an apostle*, and of course have not been seen *since* the apostolic age. Thus the reader will perceive that our 'fathers' acted a palpably inconsistent part in the introduction of Episcopacy among us, and have been under the necessity (created by their own indiscretion) of acting an equally awkward, and I fear posterity will think ridiculous part, in defending themselves against the charge of a RECKLESS USURPATION OF UNWARRANTED POWER."—*Ibid.*, pp. 116, 117.

What will the world say to this chapter, which is the Charter Methodist bishops profess to have received from Mr. Wesley, to authorize them to rule and lord it over his heritage?! Is it not most evidently a tissue of false statements and a mass of misrepresentations? Does it not bear the boldest evidence of having been fixed up with great pains by the bishops to deceive the people into the belief and support of Methodist Episcopacy? What a striking disagreement between it and Mr. W.'s relation of the transaction! In this, the bishop's chapter, the term Episcopacy is used *six times*, as if for fear that Methodists, easy as they are to believe and take without examination every thing their ministers state from the press or pulpit, would not believe that Wesley did what he had not the power to do, and what he considered as unscriptural, ordain a bishop—a term, we have shown, not used by Mr. Wesley in either Mr. Coke's certificate or Mr. Wesley's letter to the Churches! Am I not forced to believe that Messrs. Coke and Asbury, who made themselves bishops with their pens, also wrote this chapter, and

introduced the office for the consecration of a bishop, from the Episcopal Prayer Book, into the Discipline?

Will you avoid the verdict of the boldest assumption and most unwarrantable misrepresentation by these bishops to gain and preserve their power, by intimating that a Methodist Bishop is not a third order, but only an office of the second? Why then the third and distinct ordination? Why use the very office by which an English prelatical bishop is consecrated? Why is the government and control of all the other ministers committed to his sovereign will? But let Methodist historians and D.D.'s settle this.

Dr. Emory. "In whatever sense distinct ordinations constitute distinct orders, in the same sense Mr. Wesley certainly intended that we should have *three orders*. For he undeniably instituted *three distinct ordinations*."

Rev. N. Bangs, D. D., and Rev. J. Emory, D. D. "THREE ORDERS OF MINISTERS ARE RECOGNIZED, and the duties peculiar to each are clearly defined."—See Buck's Theological Dictionary, edition 1825.

Here I leave the history of the MYSTERY OF METHODISM and the rise of Methodist Prelatical Episcopacy, to save Mr. Wesley from the charge of preferring and appointing a government and order of ministers he regarded as hierarchical and unscriptural, we must conclude that the creation of Methodist Episcopacy, and the palming of it off as Mr. Wesley's, to secure its adoption, was the work of those who assumed the lordly title of Bishops, and furnished a bold instance of clerical ambition and fraud, by which priestcraft has ever sought to advance itself at the sacrifice of truth and the rights of the laity. If these discrepancies are unreal, you can explain them, if they are capable of explanation; if they are not, let your silence be the outward and visible sign and seal of their absurdity and falsehood.

LETTER VIII.

METHODISM AS IT WAS.

Its origin and design, to study the Classics—Methodism without either altar or divinity—Its members and preachers all unconverted—Wesley's conviction and conversion—His experience.

A serious question:—Who may be said to be the originator and instigator of the works and devices of wicked men?

Dear Sir:—I know of no greater contrast than that existing between "Methodism as it was," in its origin, and "Methodism as it is" at present among us. I have not the least idea that the founder of the scheme, were he to revisit the walks of life, would know that it was Methodism, or recognize it as his offspring. If the Church of England needed reform, Methodism needs it to-day. In sketching the history of Methodism, I shall confine myself to Wesley's own writings, and those of approved Methodist authors. It will therefore be wholly unnecessary for you to reply, unless to correct me when I am led into error by your writers.

"In 1729, two young men in England, (Charles and John Wesley, members of the Church of England, and the latter a minister,) reading the Bible, saw they could not be saved

without holiness, followed after it, and incited others to do so."

These two were joined by two others. They had their regular meetings together, following "after holiness," in the following manner:

"In November, 1729, at which time I came to reside at Oxford, my brother and I, and two young gentlemen more, agreed to spend three or four evenings in a week together. On Sunday evening we read something in divinity, on other nights the Greek and Latin classics."

This, I learn from Mr. Wesley, was the origin of Methodism, which you call upon me and the world to regard and fellowship as the Church of Christ. That I am not mistaken, I quote Wesley's own words:

"On Monday, May 1st, our little Society began in London. But it may be observed, the first rise of Methodism, so called, was in November, 1729, when four of us met together at Oxford."

I have found the Methodist Church(?) in its origin composed of four unregenerate young men. Its meetings were held three or four nights in the week, and its worship was, not the reading of the Bible, not prayer or singing, for not one of these employments are mentioned, but *reading the Greek and Latin classics!* Pretty employment for a Christian Church, truly!!

On Sunday, *something* in Divinity! No *Bible* mentioned as read at any meeting—no *prayer* offered—no *song* sung! And yet this is all the Methodist Church was at its origin!! Am I not justified in saying that it was not a Christian Church? That it has no more or juster claims to the title than a College Society or Masonic Lodge? You know I am justified. You dare not say that Methodism, in 1729, was a *Christian Church*—was even a *Religious Society*, or

its meetings religious convocations, or even one of its four members Christians! No, sir, your tongue will never say it, nor your pen write it. And if Methodism then was not a Church of Christ, Methodism now is not, and ought not to be so called, for it is what it ever was, a human institute, purely of man and not of God.

These young men the following summer commenced visiting prisons, the poor, and the sick, and were joined by a young man from Merton College.

In April, 1732, Mr. Clayton joined them, and by his advice they began to observe the fasts of the ancient [*i. e.*, Catholic] Church, every Wednesday and Friday. The first religious rite observed in this young Church(?) of unregenerate men, was a *Romish one!! penance!!* "Two or three of his pupils, one of my brothers, and two or three of mine, and Mr. Broughton, of Exeter College, desired likewise to spend six evenings in a week with us, from 6 to 9 o'clock, partly in reading and considering a chapter in the Greek Testament, and partly in close conversation." The worship of the Methodist Society still is purely of the "Greek and Latin classics"—it is without a *gospel*, an *altar*, or a song of praise. "To these were added, the next year, Mr. Ingham, with two or three other gentlemen of Queen's College; then Mr. Hervey; and in the year 1735, Mr. Geo. Whitefield. I think, at this time, we were 14 or 15 in number, all of one heart (i. e. *unregenerate* doubtless, as Charles and John Wesley were) and one mind," (*i. e.* carnal.)

Such was the Methodist Society in England up to the year 1735. How conformed to the model and pattern of the New Testament Churches! How scriptural in its membership, and especially in its *worship!* It is to be remarked, that at this time it did not sprinkle infants!

When the Wesleys left for Georgia, Methodism waned at

Oxford, but it was translated to America. Wesley says that "the second rise of Methodism was at Savannah, in April, 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at my house." He writes from Georgia of this Society, thus: "After the evening service, as many of my *parishioners* (not Christians, necessarily) as desire it meet at my house (as they do on Wednesday evening) and spend about an hour in prayer, singing and mutual exhortation. A smaller number (most of those who desire to communicate the next day,) meet here on Saturday evening; and a few of these come to me on the other evenings, and pass half an hour in the same employment."

This, Mr. Wesley tells us, was the second rise of Methodism. But I cannot for the life of me see any thing that will justify its being called a Christian Church, or even a Christian *Society*.

The third and last rise, he says, "was at London, on this day, May 1st, 1737, when forty or fifty of us agreed to meet together every Wednesday evening, in order to a *free conversation*, (about what, the Greek and Latin classics?) begun and ended with singing and prayer."*

"In January, 1739, our *Society*, (Mr. Wesley did not presume to call it a *Church*) consisted of about sixty persons. It continued gradually increasing all the year. In April I went down to Bristol, and soon after a few persons agreed to meet weekly, with the *same intention* as those in London."† These meetings, at first purely literary, seem now to be only social conversational meetings, and begun and ended with prayer, as modern Singing Schools, and as Temperance and Odd Fellows' Lodges are. We can discover nothing to give them a claim to the title of *Christian Church*.

* Wesley's Works, vol. vii., p. 348.

† Wesley's Works, vol. vii., p. 349

We have seen Methodism fairly begun, and traced its history minutely for ten years, up to 1739; from this period it commences to spread rapidly in every direction, Societies of the above feature formed in different towns and cities of England, and John Wesley assuming the control of them, dictating sundry rules and regulations to them, from time to time, appointing leaders, exhorters, and preachers, &c.

It might be well to pause here and enquire in what do Methodist writers regard Methodism at this point? What title claim for it, and what it is designed to effect? Was it in Mr. Wesley's wildest dreams that it was a Church, or that it ought to be one?

We quote from Methodism, by Inskip, pages 37, 38:

"But this organization was *not a distinct sect, holding a particular formal creed, or prescribing any exclusive method and ceremonies of worship. It was a Society in the Church.* Hence, those connected with the 'Societies,' were earnestly and repeatedly warned of the evil of separating from the Church. They were also urged to attend the ordinances, and receive the sacraments, as administered by the Church."

Dr. Bond in his work, entitled "Economy of Methodism," page 17, says:

"Let it be remembered that no original purpose of establishing a separate sect or denomination of people entered into the design of Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors. They only designed to waken up the different protestant denominations, and especially the Church of England, to a just apprehension of the renovating influence of gospel truth and of the importance of Christian discipline." They were Societies *in the Church* of England.

Such was Methodism prior to and during the Revolution in this country. There were Methodists in all denominations, because Methodism was no Church, but only a sort of

Union Society, like union prayer and social meetings, for the purpose of seeking and promoting personal piety, and had it continued such only, I would not lift my voice or pen against it; but its ambitious leaders have set it up as a Church, and claim for it all the regard and consideration claimed in God's word for the Church of Christ, and as such I repudiate it as Antichristian, a mock Church, a rival and traitorous fold, to mislead those who would otherwise follow Christ.

Let it be distinctly noticed, that it was not necessary for one to be a *Christian* to be a Methodist, no more than it is to-day, but only to desire to be one. "Only one condition is required, a *real desire to save their souls.*" No candid man will maintain that this is the only condition necessary to entitle one to membership in the Church of Christ. We suppose the man does not live who does not desire to be saved, and are all then qualified for Church membership?

Did Mr. Wesley intend to form a Church? Mr. Inskip says, "In the beginning, Mr. Wesley did not conceive the idea of forming a Society at all. Afterward, however, *he* (not Jesus Christ, not an apostle, not an angel, but he, John Wesley, priest of the Church of England) consummated such an organization as he found (taught or exampled in the New Testament? No, he did not consult that but as he found) to be suitable and necessary. But this organization was not a distinct sect, holding a particular formal creed, or prescribing any exclusive method and ceremonies of worship. It was a SOCIETY IN THE CHURCH, (i. e. of England.) Very well, so long as it was only a Society in the Church of England, for the cultivation of personal religion, I find no fault—possibly it effected good—but this point I do maintain, if it was only a *Society* while in the Church of England, it is certain that it is only a *Society* when out of it. Its

separation from the Church of England did not make it the Church of Christ. It is nothing more, and can be, so long as it is Methodism, nothing more this day than a human Society, devised at first and now governed by ambitious men; and those who support it obey and follow men, not Christ, and in their practice set the work device and authority of men above the wisdom and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ. Mr. Inskip seems to be penetrated with the conviction that his Church is but a *sham* Church. He claims for Methodism but little more than Masonry claims to be, and nothing more than the American Bible Society is—a "*system*"—not a Church, but only a system or scheme of a religious and moral enterprise! "Methodism is not a mere sectarian form of Christianity, *but a* SYSTEM of religious and *moral enterprise.*" Page 40. Again, he says, "A more wise or better arranged SYSTEM of *religious and moral* enterprise, could not have been conceived. Of course, LIKE ALL OTHER HUMAN INSTITUTIONS, IT HAS ITS DEFECTS AND IMPERFECTIONS!" Page 65. Here Mr. Inskip frankly admits that it is a *human institution*, and an *imperfect* and *defective* scheme. May I allow him to tell us here who devised the *System?* See page 54:

"Finally, it may be said, Methodism in England and America, was a *special system.*"

"To meet the emergency which then existed, God raised up a company of great men—men who were great in intellectual endowment, moral excellence, and inventive genius. There was John Wesley, who has justly been designated the greatest of ecclesiastical legislators—Whitefield, the most extraordinary of pulpit orators—Charles Wesley, among the best of sacred poets—Coke, the leader of modern missionaries—Asbury, the most laborious of bishops—and Clark and Benson, one the most learned, the other the best

practical commentator ever known. THESE MEN DEVISED THIS POWERFUL INSTRUMENTALITY, WELL STYLED 'CHRISTIANITY IN EARNEST.'"

"Every agency they could command, however novel and irregular, they used with energy and enthusiasm."

The Wesleys, Whitefield, Coke, Asbury, Clark and Benson, then DEVISED Methodism. They did not copy it from the Bible, or mould it according to the teachings of Christ, or conform it to the model Church, built by Christ, or Mr. Inskip would not say it was a HUMAN institution, or DEVISED by the above men! Will Methodist Christians think in what fold they are, whom they are following? and what institution they are supporting!

To show still more clearly that "Methodism as it was," was a far different thing from "Methodism as it is," with its lofty and hollow pretensions, as well as to show that it is understood by the intelligent, we quote from the February number of the North British Review:

"For a long time even after the societies under his care had become very numerous, he would not allow his preachers to assemble their people during the ordinary hours of public worship on the Lord's day, and to the last he refused to give them a general permission to administer the sacraments. The *people who joined him, he wished to remain still members of the Established Church*, to attend upon her worship, and to receive sealing ordinances in her communion. This is the position still maintained by that section of his followers who call themselves Primitive Methodists. Wesley's plans and arrangements were directed so as to afford to those who joined his Society, advantages for growing in grace, for adorning their profession, and for promoting the interests of religion, *additional* to those they might possess as members of the Church of England and attenders upon her ordinances.

He *did not intend to form a distinct and separate Church*, and in *point of fact did not do so*. He does not seem to have reached any convictions, which appeared to him to make it men's duty to disapprove of the constitution of the Church of England, or to separate from her communion. So that Wesleyan Methodism, under its founder, *was not a Church, and did not profess to be a Church*, but only an Institute, regulated in its arrangements by present and temporary circumstances, and *supplementary* to the Church of England for promoting the Christian good of the community."

"Different considerations seem to show that Wesleyanism even yet scarcely professes to be a scripturally organized Church, and if so, it must be, in respect to its organization, a device of human wisdom, and therefore not destined to perpetuity, not fitted for permanence."

"Wesley did not profess to be organizing a Church upon a *scriptural* basis. His Institute (Methodism) was the product of *his own wisdom and sagacity*, and must be subject to the fluctuations and instability of all merely *human* things."

What unparalleled effrontery, then, for Methodists, in the face of these facts, to declare that their Society is a Christian *Church*, and *scripturally* organized!

Before I close this epistle I would enquire into the peculiar qualifications of the Wesleys to found a Christian Church, or a religious Society, for they organized the Methodist Society, while Coke and Asbury *assumed* for it the name and pretensions of a Church.

Mr. Wesley was ordained a Deacon of the Church of England in 1725, and received priest's orders about three years afterwards, 1728.

In 1735, ten years after his first ordination and six years after he and his brother Charles had started Methodism at Oxford, they both sailed for Georgia to convert the Indians.

He was so ill-suited with the people of Georgia, and they so displeased with him as a minister, that he relinquished his scheme and fled from America, in the face of a civil prosecution for malfeasance in office, and improper behavior towards a Mrs. Williamson. See his Journal, vol. iii., p. 42. On his return, and afterwards falling in with Peter Bohler, a pious Moravian, he became convinced that he was unregenerate. "This, then, I have learned in the ends of the earth—that I am fallen short of the glory of God; that my whole heart is altogether corrupt and abominable. I am a child of wrath, an heir of hell. I left my native country in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity; but what have I learned myself the mean time? Why, (what I the least of all suspected,) that I, who went to America to convert others, *was never myself converted to God.*"* This was written January 29, 1738. He became a penitent enquirer, and in May following, (Wednesday 24th,) obtained satisfactory evidence to himself of having passed from death unto life. He says, "In the evening I went unwillingly to a Society in Aldersgate street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart, through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death."†

That I have not misrepresented Mr. Wesley, I quote the concurrent testimony of Mr. Inskip. Pp. 19, 20.

"He labored some time among the colonists, with con

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* Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 53.

† Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 74.

siderable perplexity and discouragement. He returned to England, and under the wise and faithful teaching of Peter Bohler, was led to apprehend the truth as it is in Jesus. After earnestly struggling to obtain the blessing of God, he was enabled to 'lay hold of the hope set before him,' and rejoiced in the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sin."

His brother Charles professed a change of heart May 3d, 1738.

From his history we learn that John Wesley had been preaching thirteen years before he was a converted man himself! Thus while in an unregenerate state, a wicked sinner before God, and nine years before he was a converted man, he and his brother Charles, also a sinner like himself, devised and set on foot the Methodist Society! It would be wrong for Christians to follow or obey in religion the brightest and purest angel—Christ never authorized an angel to devise a Church for his children, much less men, and how *infinitely* much less *unconverted men.* If it did not seem too severe, I would ask you this question:

Are not all sinners, of their father the Devil, and do not they do *his* will and obey *his* behests? See John viii., 44; and Rom. vi., 16, 20. Methodism is the work and device of ungodly men; in whose will did it have its origin? Let Christian Methodists consider well the fact, they are supporting with all their talents and influence a system which they have been taught to look upon as a veritable *Church* of Christ, but which in fact is a *human system*, devised, and set on foot, and directed, by *unconverted* and *unregenerate* men! How will they answer the serious interrogative of the Saviour, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things *I* command you?" And how will they reconcile their discipleship with the test given by Christ, "If any man

will be *my* disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

They certainly are not following Christ while they enter the folds and follow the teachings of John Wesley, and submit to his authority, and that of his successors, instead of Jesus Christ alone.

Is it not virtually rejecting Christ—his authority—his laws, and casting reproach upon his Church, for a Christian or a sinner to turn his back upon it, and enter into, and give all his influence to support and build up a *rival society*, and that, too, devised by confessedly *unregenerate* men? Is it not exalting a HUMAN SOCIETY above the churches of Christ? Is it not offering a flagrant insult to the blessed Saviour? I beg and entreat of you, sir, and of your brethren, to think of these questions seriously, and decide them upon your knees before God.

LETTER IX.

METHODISM IN GEORGIA IN 1736.

John and Charles Wesley sail for Georgia to convert the Indians, and to plant Methodism in America—Trouble on shipboard—Immersion of Mary Welch—Mr. W.'s admission—Difficulty on land—Mrs. Parker's child—Mr. Wesley charged by his brother of being quarrelsome—Trouble with a lady—Mr. Wesley a rejected lover—His revenge—Is apprehended, tried and condemned—Flees from justice, and leaves Savannah by night—Seeks the sea coast and sails for England.

Dear Sir:—The history of Methodism sketched in these letters would not be complete unless I follow it to America, and notice some phases of it here. There is not much remarkable to note, but features are developed in Georgia which have strongly characterized Methodism and Methodists until the present day.

In 1735, Messrs. Wesley felt called of God, or of some body else, to go to America to convert the Indians, although they were unconverted men themselves! Accordingly they set sail October 14, in the good ship Simmonds, accompanied by Mr Ingham and Dela Motte. We have now the em-

bodiment of Methodism on the Simmonds afloat, and steering for the coast of Georgia, North America.

Mr. Wesley behaved himself very well—studying German and reading his prayers, except he became mortally terrified in every flurry or storm, which fact, to use his own words, plainly showed him that he was unfit to die.

Having been on board about three weeks, when Mr. Wesley discovered his disposition to meddle with the regulations of the ship, and to raise a general disturbance among officers and men, because he claimed that he and his friends —the Methodist Society—did not receive water enough. New officers are appointed to satisfy Mr. Wesley. He does not deny the charge which the excluded officers prefer against him, i. e. of raising all the disturbance and procuring their discharge; he says, "they were highly exasperated as to whom they imputed the change."—Wesley's Works, vol. iii. p. 11.

Remark.—Interference and dictation in the concerns of others, which they have a strange way of making their own are too characteristic of Methodists among us.

After this, all things went on aboard as usual, with abundance of reading prayers, as storms and blows were frequent, until Thursday, February 5, 1736, the ship entered Savannah river, and cast anchor near Tybee's Island. Friday, February 6th, about eight in the morning, the first Methodist set foot on American soil, upon a small uninhabited island, over against Tybee, some twenty miles below Savannah. I have been thus particular in noting the "Plymouth Rock" of Methodism, as some General Conference might see fit to hold a session there, or do something else commemorative of the planting of Methodism in Georgia by John Wesley, and his first and last landing on this continent. *It was over against Tybee Island in the Savannah river.* On Saturday

he was visited by a German preacher, and interrogated upon personal religion, at which Mr. Wesley, the great founder of a new Church, which you call a Church of Christ, "was surprised, and knew not what to answer." Poor man, he was a stranger to religion, though as pious as a Pharisee. The next item I note in his Journal, is that famous entry of Saturday, February 21, 1736—"Mary Welch, aged eleven, was baptized *according to the custom of the first Church*, and the rule of the Church of England, by *immersion*. The child was ill then, but recovered from that hour."

Now, sir, as this has been denied being in Wesley's Journal, as it is also denied that Wesley ever intimated that immersion was *the*, not *a*, custom, (as though only *one of the modes*, but *the*, which implies the *solitary* and peculiar custom) of the apostolic Church, I appeal to you, sir, in this case, if I have not given a correct transcript of the Journal entry for Saturday the 21st. If I have not, please correct me; if I have, no correction or remark is needed. I would call the attention of the reader of these letters, especially of Baptists, that Mr. Wesley does not say *he* baptized Mary Welch, as he is often, doubtless, represented as saying, but simply that Mary Welch *was baptized* by immersion; he does not say by whom, and it makes not a straw's difference—Wesley says distinctly that immersion was *the* custom of the ancient Church. This was his faith as a scholar, a graduate, and a Fellow of Oxford College.

On Sunday, March 7, 1736, Mr. Wesley entered upon his ministry at Savannah, and preached from the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians.

In his Journal of Saturday, April 17, I find an account of the formation of the first Methodist Society in America. He says, "Not finding, as yet, any door open for the (?) pursuing our main design, we considered in what manner we

might be useful to the little flock at Savannah; and we agreed, 1. To advise the more serious among them to form themselves into a *sort of little Society*, and to meet once or twice a week, in order to reprove, instruct, and exhort one another. 2. To select out of these a smaller number for a more intimate union with each other, which might be forwarded, partly by our conversing singly with each, and partly by inviting them all together to our house, and this we determined to do every Sunday, in the afternoon."

Here we see what Methodism was in its incipiency, simply a prayer or social meeting—how useful and well calculated to accomplish its design, i. e. to secure and cultivate personal religion. Contrast Methodism in 1736, and the monster power that clerical ambition has now made of it. Let Methodists ponder this well.

I find another entry in the Journal, about which much has been, and is said and written, which is positively denied. It reads, "Wednesday, May 5. I was asked to baptize a child of Mr. Parker's, second bailiff of Savannah, but Mrs. Parker told me, 'Neither Mr. Parker nor I will consent to its *being dipped*.' I answered, 'If you certify that your child is weak, it will suffice (the Rubric says) to pour water upon it.' She replied, 'Nay, the child is not weak, but I am resolved it shall not be dipped.' This *argument* I could not confute, so I went home, and the child was baptized (what was done to it?) by another person."

The above extract from the Journal, which you will not contradict, shows conclusively three things:

1st. That the general practice of the Church of England, at this period, 1736, was to immerse healthy children. The case of Mary Welch corroborates this.

2d. That the strict construction of the Rubric was falling, or beginning to fall, into disuse, since one was found

who would sprinkle (for we suppose Mrs. Parker had her own way) the child, although its parents certified that it was not weak, which was a palpable violation of the Rubric.

3d. That Mr. Wesley was a firm believer in immersion being the only Christian or admissible baptism, *except in case of sickness*, or he would not have presumed to incur the displeasure of the bailiff of Savannah. It must have been because of his conscientious scruples, his scriptural reasons, and not his fear of modifying the rules of the Church of England, for we find him charged by the grand jury, with 1st. Not declaring his adherence to the Church of England;" and 2d. "With dividing the morning service on Sunday."

As additional and conclusive proof that we are correct, we quote the following from the Life of Wesley, by Henry Moore, vol. 1st, page 425, published for the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1824. Moore was the only surviving trustee of Mr. Wesley's MSS:

"When Mr. Wesley baptized adults professing faith in Christ, he chose to do it by trine immersion, if the persons would submit to it, judging this to be *the apostolic method of baptizing*. October 26th, he says, 'I baptized Mr. Wigginton *in the river* by Baptist Mills, and went on my way rejoicing, to French Hay." This was in 1739.

We claim Wesley as an immersionist, when put upon his *scholarship*.

At this time, June 3d, indications of Mr. Wesley's exceeding unpopularity is evident from the fact that only one family came to the communion. Mr. Wesley says it was owing to a few words which a woman had spoken, that set the whole town in a blaze. We shall hear more about a woman.

On Tuesday, the 22d, Mr. Wesley writes, "Observing much coldness in Mr. ———'s behavior, I asked him the

reason of it. He answered, 'I like nothing you do. All your sermons are *satires* (there could not be much of the spirit of religion, for Mr. W. was not converted until two years after this) upon particular persons, (i. e. personal attacks) therefore I will never hear you more, and all the people are of my mind, for we wont hear ourselves *abused*. Besides, they say, *they* are Protestants, but as for you, they cannot tell what religion you are of. (Not at all strange, poor fellow, he had *no religion!*) They never heard of such a religion before. They do not know what to make of it. And then your PRIVATE BEHAVIOR—all the QUARRELS that have been here since you came, have been long of you. Indeed, there is neither man nor woman in the town who minds a word you say."

We can testify that like *founder* like *people*. The facility with which Methodists can to this day promote quarrels, and throw a whole town or neighborhood into ferment and contention, is becoming widely noticed, and it is passing into a proverb, "they beat the Methodists to quarrel." It was so with their father John, whether in England or Georgia. This is one of the striking characteristics of Methodism every where—it must rule supreme and absolutely, or it will "quarrel" with all who will not yield to its direction.

A difficulty arose between Mr. Wesley and some one in Carolina, who would marry Mr. Wesley's parishioners without license. Mr. Wesley took a journey away to Charleston to complain to his bishop, and did not leave until bishop Gadsden promised to see the fellow should offend no more. Mr. Wesley had a storm at sea and almost a shipwreck coming back, to pay him for his trouble. I mention this trifling circumstance to aid in the delineation of Mr. Wesley's character, he was so jealous of his rights.

July 3. Mr Wesley begins to experience fresh trouble

from the ladies. It is a widow this time, who testifies that Mr. Wesley addressed her repeatedly on the subject of matrimony, and she rejected him. I know not whether this was the same woman who set all the town in a blaze a short time before, so that none would attend on Mr. Wesley at the communion. In his Journal I find this entry: "Immediately after the holy communion, I mentioned to Mrs. Williamson (Mr. Causton's niece) *something* I thought reprovable in her behavior. At this she appeared *extremely angry;* said she did not expect *such usage from me*, and at the turn of the street through which we were walking home, went abruptly away."

August 7. Mr. Wesley repelled this Mrs. Williamson from the holy communion, and on Monday following the Recorder of Savannah issued a warrant for Mr. Wesley, and on Tuesday he is taken by the Constable and carried before the Bailiff, and is held over to the next Court for trial.

Mr. Causton warmly espouses the defence of his niece, and boldly alleges that Mr. Wesley's course towards Mrs. Williamson was "purely out of revenge, because he Mr. Wesley, had made proposals of marriage to her, *which she had rejected*, and married Mr. Williamson," and now Mr. Wesley sought to disgrace her to indulge his spite. Mr. Wesley does not deny addressing Mrs. Williamson.

"Tuesday 16. Mrs. Williamson swore to and signed an affidavit, *intimating much more than it asserted*, but asserting that Mr. Wesley had *many times* proposed marriage to her; all of which proposals she had rejected. Of this I desired a copy, Mr. Causton replied, 'Sir, you may have one from any of the newspapers of America.'"*

* This bill or indictment, I am informed by Judge Warren, of Albany, Ga., is still preserved in the Court House at Savannah, where it can be seen.

Mr. Wesley is tried by a grand jury of forty-four, upon an indictment of ten specifications, and the jury was charged to beware of *spiritual tyranny*, and to oppose the *new illegal authority which was usurped over their consciences.* Mr. Wesley was naturally tyrannical. The jury found a true bill against John, the founder of Methodism, for his conduct towards Mrs. Williamson, and nine other charges. Poor man, he was surrounded by difficulties—unconverted, *unmarried*, a woman prosecuting him for his conduct towards her, far from home, and his own people thoroughly disgusted with his conduct, and outraged by his arrogance and imperial *dictation ! !*

He is thinking of home, and the poor common people of England, who will bear his insults and lordings over them far better than these Georgians. Mr. Wesley concludes that he has mistaken the call to America, or answered for some one else. He writes October 7, "I consulted my friends, whether *God did not call me to return to England.*" Poor fellow, God call *you*, to be sure! His friends decided not that *God* called him, but "that he ought to go, but not yet. What does the great Wesley think of running away from America, and away from a court trial, for the ill treatment of a woman, and unwarrantable spiritual dictation, and a pub lic nuisance ? ! !

He writes in his journal of November 3, "I appeared again at the court, holden on that day, and again at the court held Tuesday, November 25, on which day Mr. Causton desired to speak with me. He then read me some affidavits which had been made, September 15, last past; in one of which it was affirmed that I then *abused* Mr. Causton in his own house, calling him *liar*, *villain*, and so on, (alas, how familiar, Mr. Soule, are these terms with your editors and preachers!) It was now likewise repeated before several

persons, which indeed I had forgot, that I had been REPRIMANDED AT THE LAST COURT for an ENEMY to, and HINDERER of the PUBLIC PEACE."

"I again consulted with my friends, who agreed with me that the time we looked for *was now come.*" No wonder. But Mr. Wesley will stay and stand his trial, will he not—he will not run away like a guilty felon from these shores? Hear him:

"In the afternoon, (December 2, 1737,) the magistrates published an order, requiring all the officers and sentinels to prevent my going out of the province; and forbidding any person to assist me to do so. Being now only *a prisoner at large*, in a place where I knew by experience every day would give fresh opportunity to *procure evidence* of words I never said, and actions I never did, (what a charge against your own brethren and Church!) I clearly saw the hour was come *for leaving this place;* and as soon as evening prayers were over, *about eight o'clock*, the tide then serving, I shook off the dust of my feet, and left Georgia." Thus did Mr. Wesley shake off forever American dust from his feet, but he could not so easily rid himself of the unenviable character that he had earned for himself here in the short space of one year and nine months.

It is not expected that Mr. Wesley would ever love America after such a leave of it, and his future life and writings attest the fact that he never did. This was the first effort to plant Methodism on the soil of Georgia, and that by its founder—the great Wesley. Thus have I traced its history, until Methodism took ship and tide in the person of Wesley, on that ever memorable night, at eight o'clock, and sailed away for England, Thursday the 22d, on board of the ship Samuel, Captain Pearcy. See Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 45

LETTER X.

Methodism not necessarily a Christian Society—May be composed of sinners alone, preachers and members, as at first—Capt. Foy the inventor of Class Meetings, Class Leaders and Stewards—A Catechetical Review of the facts of this letter.

Sir:—Having noticed in my last Letter, Methodism as it was, in its conception and birth, I am prepared to mark, step by step, its growth and development into "Methodism as it is." Change, is written upon every page of its history—it is a system of change, void of every feature of stability or permanency. This, of itself forfeits all its claims to the title of a Church of Christ, since his Church was to remain unchanged through all the mutations of time; and, then, no one but Christ has any right to change the institutions of his Church. It would be *impious* in angels or men to presume to add to or subtract from, or change in *the least* respect, the laws or organization of the Church of the living God. Angels would start back in horror at the thought of such daring! But Methodism, devised by Mr. Wesley, was changed and modified by him, from time to time, during his whole life, to suit his taste, and since it belonged to him as a Society of his own creating, he had a right to modify it

"*ad libitum*," and "*ad infinitum*." I find no fault with him for this, or for any thing he did, or to his Methodism, as he conducted it at the beginning, for he did not claim that it was a Church—he never presumed to call it a Christian Church, or advised others to do so. But its present arro gant claims to divine origin, and to be recognized and com muned with as the Church of Christ, set up for it by the suc cessors of Wesley—and Methodism as it is, and as made by them, I do most utterly and heartily repudiate, as an un scriptural, anti-reasonable and anti-American power, a cleri cal despotism of the direst type, dangerous to religion, and to the religious liberty of this land.

To sustain my first position, Inskip in his history of Methodism, says, p. 37, 38, "In the beginning, Mr. Wesley did not *conceive the idea of forming a Society at all.* (Much less, then, a distinct Church, or any part of it.) "Afterwards, however, *he* consummated such an organization as *he found to be suitable* and necessary." Here it is frankly admitted that, 1. Mr. Wesley had no idea at first of forming a Society; 2. That *he did*, at length, *organize one himself*, with out consulting any one—it was his own work! 3. That he did not consult the Scriptures for a plan, or conform his organization to its teachings, but fixed up his system to suit his own notions, and as *he* thought to be suitable! Why, sir, if he thus coolly and deliberately had gone to work with the design of founding a Christian Church, he would be justly entitled to the title of *Antichrist!* Thus setting up his authority and kingdom in open opposition and hostility to that of Jesus Christ, who is the only Lawgiver in Zion, and is Head over all things to his Church. Though Wesley did not do it, and I will do him the justice to say, had no thought of it; yet have not his successors done it? Have not they set up Methodism, and called it the Church of

Christ; and is it not this day urged forward by its rulers as a rival of Christ's true Church, though originated, as we have seen, with an unconverted man, been modified by men, and governed by *human laws*, subject to perpetual change to suit the whims of men until now? And as a rival Church, is it not hostile to the progress, and even the existence of Christ's Church in the world? Does it not subvert the constitution, laws, government, membership, and ordinances and design of the Church of the New Testament? Let candid men think! Let Christians who love our Lord Jesus Christ consider the questions well!

But to proceed with my proof: "But this *organization was not a distinct sect*, holding a particular formal creed, or prescribing any exclusive method and ceremonies of worship. *It was a Society in the Church*" (of England.)

And when it left the Church of England, it was a Society in the world, and can be nothing more or less, so long as it remains Methodism.

"Hence those connected with the '*Societies*' were earnestly and repeatedly warned of the evil of separating from the Church" (of England.) "They were also urged to attend the ordinances, and receive the sacraments, as administered by the Church" (of England.) "And this course was continued a number of years, at least as long as it was deemed expedient and proper. However, as providential indications were given, and the wants of any particular time or place, were clearly developed, *Methodism modified its instrumentalities, and changed its position.*" It thus vindicates its right to change, and its claim to the title of a "religious proteus." Let me trace its *changing progress.*

Its first rise was in 1729, at Oxford—it appeared in 1736 in Savannah, Ga.—and its first appearance in London was in 1738, May 1st, on which day a Society of forty or fifty was

organized in London. Mr. Wesley travelled from place to place, and organized his Societies. He supplied these Societies with preachers from those who joined with him, and those he appointed as exhorters and preachers from among the most zealous and intelligent of his members.

In this year Wesley leased the Foundry and fitted it up for preaching, and here, for the first time, we find Methodism with a temple; and, strange as it sounds, from 1729 to 1735, it was without an *altar!* and the object of its *worship*, the Greek and Latin classics!

If we look into the Foundry in 1738, we will find a Methodist Society, and John Wesley its founder and master, without laws or officers, save its head—simply a religious meeting of all who wished to save their souls or hear Mr. Wesley preach.

As a Society, it had as yet but one element of organization—but one bond of union, and that was the condition of *admission.* It could not be regarded so much as a Christian or religious Society, in the sense that Christians alone, or religious persons, were embraced in it, or admitted to its privileges, but as a Society of individuals, having a religious end in view, i. e., to save their souls. I would call attention here to the fact that Methodism was not and is not strictly a religious or Christian Society, since it did not, *and still does not require a profession of religion as a condition of membership!!* IT MAY CONSIST OF UNCONVERTED PERSONS ALONE, PREACHERS AND MEMBERS, as it did in the beginning, from 1729 to May 24th, 1738, *twenty-three days* after he organized his first Society in London! and nearly *ten years after the first rise of Methodism!!*

Condition of Admission into a Methodist Society, A.D. 1734–1784.

Inskip quotes Wesley's own words.

"One circumstance more is quite peculiar to the people called Methodists; that is, *the terms* upon which *any person* may be admitted into *their society*, (not the Church of Christ!) They do not impose, *in order to their admission*, *any opinions whatever!* Let them be Churchmen or Dissenters, Presbyterians or Independents, *it is no obstacle!* The Presbyterian may be a Presbyterian still; the Independent or Anabaptist use his own mode of worship; so may the *Quaker* (*?*) and none will contend with him about it. They think and let think. *One* condition, and *one* only, is required: a real desire to save their souls. Where this is, it is enough, THEY DESIRE NO MORE, THEY LAY STRESS UPON NOTHING ELSE!" —*Inskip*, p. 35. Unconverted men, then, sceptics, universalists, and infidels, if they wish their souls to be saved, were as properly entitled to membership in ancient Methodism, as was Mr. Wesley himself. By referring to the Discipline of Methodism South, page 36, you will find that a *profession of religion is not a condition of membership in a Methodist Society to-day!* "There is but one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, 'a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.'" Is this *the only* condition of membership in the Church of Christ—was it the only condition of admission into the Churches of the New Testament?

Up to this period we find Methodism without a bishop, eldership, or itinerancy, class meetings, leaders, or stewards, or even baptism and the Lord's supper.

The Origin of Classes and Class Meetings—of Class Leaders and Stewards.

I will allow Mr. Wesley himself to inform us how class meetings and class leaders originated. "But when a large number of people were joined together, the great difficulty was to keep them together. For they were continually scattering hither and thither, and we knew no way to help it. But *God provided* for this also, when we thought not of it." A year or two after, Mr. Wesley met the chief of the society in Bristol, and inquired, "How shall we pay the debt upon the preaching-house?" Captain Foy stood up and said, "Let every one in the society give a penny a week, and it will easily be done." "But many of them," said one, "have not a penny to give." "True," said the Captain; "then put ten or twelve of them to me. Let each of these give what they can weekly, and I will supply what is wanting. Many others made the same offer, so Mr. Wesley divided the societies among them, assigning a class of about twelve persons to each of these, who were termed *leaders*." —Wesley's Works, vol. vii., p. 316.

From the above, it will be seen, 1. That the class and the class leader was the invention of Captain Foy, and not conceived of by Wesley at all, only adopted by him. Think of it. The class meeting law is considered one of the essential features of Methodism, "a *vital doctrine*," with the rulers of it. Since they will exclude every member, however pious he may be, if he refuses to obey a law that was not of Mr. Wesley's devising, but suggested to him by Captain Foy, of his Majesty's marines, we suppose! An English captain of the marines invented the *class* meeting! which American Christians must now obey, or be excluded!!

2. That both the class and the class leader were devised and instituted purely for a secular end, the *collection of money* from the society. The Methodist class leader is then the chief publican or tax collector of Methodism, and successor to Captain Foy! Yet, for refusing to attend the class meetings, which were, and still are, the *pay days* of Methodists—a meeting originating in the mind of a marine captain, for the purpose of paying taxes, the Discipline of modern Methodism directs that the member be excluded from the Methodist Society, although guilty of no immorality—of no offence towards God or man!

Another duty was enjoined upon these leaders, which duty was *accidentally* suggested to Mr. Wesley: "Not long after, (the appointment of leaders,) one of these informed Mr. Wesley that, calling on such a one in his house, he found him quarrelling with his wife—another was found in drink. It immediately struck into Mr. Wesley's mind, "*This* is the very thing we wanted; the *leaders* are the persons who may not only receive the contributions, but also *watch over* the souls of their brethren. The society in London being informed of this, willingly followed the example of that in Bristol, as did every society from that time, whether in Europe or America."—Vol. vii., p. 316.

The class leaders, then, were designed to be the *tax-gatherers* and *spies*, or *informers*, of the class appointed to them.

There is one more officer so nearly allied to the leader, that I will notice his origin here, *i. e.* the steward.

"In a few days some of them said, 'Sir, we will not sit under your preaching for nothing, we will subscribe quarterly.' I said, 'I will have nothing, for I want nothing. My fellowship supplies me with all I want.' One of them replied, 'Nay, but you want £115 to pay for the lease of the

Foundry, and likewise a large sum of money to put it into repair.' On this consideration, I suffered them to subscribe; and when the society met, I asked, 'Who will take the trouble of *receiving* this money and paying it where it is needful?' One said, 'I will do it, and keep the account for you.' So here was the first steward. Afterward I desired one or two more to help me, as stewards, and in process of time, a greater number."—Wesley's Works, vol. v. p. 220.

Stewards, then, are the receivers and disbursers of the money collected by the *publicans*.

Let us review the features of Methodism developed between A. D. 1729–1738; and as you teach your people by questions and answers, it may be more agreeable to yourself to glance over the history in this form.

Q. In what year did Methodism first appear?

A. November 26, A. D. 1729.—Wesley's Works, vol. vii., p. 348.

Q. By whom was it originated—is it of heaven or of men?

A. Of *men*, as Methodists themselves boast that *English* Methodism was founded by John and Charles Wesley, and two others, at Oxford, A. D. 1729.

Q. What was the *original* design of Methodism, religious or literary?

A. Purely *literary*, as the first Methodists devoted the evenings of the week to the reading of the Greek and Roman classics. Methodism had no *altar* for many years, and its worship was the *classics*.—See Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 6.

Q. Were the originators of the scheme of Methodism converted men?

A. Not one of them, as can be discovered. Charles Wesley did not profess a personal knowledge of religion until Wednesday, May 3d, 1738 and John not until Wednesday, May 24 1738.

Q. May it not be justly said that Methodism *came up out of the earth?*

A. I think so, and many reflecting men are beginning to think so, it being purely of an earthly origin, and in this respect answering to a *type of power to arise* and take the place of the second beast, or Roman Catholic Church.—Rev. xiii., 11.

Q. With whom originated the class meetings and class leaders, and stewards, of Methodism, and for what purpose?

A. With a certain Captain Foy, in the year 1738, for the purpose of collecting money from the people. The society was divided into classes of twelve persons, and a collector, called a class *leader*, was set over them to receive their weekly contributions; for this purpose they met weekly, in classes of twelve, and were called *class meetings.* A person offered to receive the money so collected, and pay it over, and Mr. Wesley accepted him, and called him a steward, and then appointed others in his society.

Q. What other duties did Mr. Wesley enjoin upon these leaders or tax collectors; and how did the duty occur to him?

A. He afterwards appointed each of them to be *spies* and *informants* upon their several classes, and to report what they saw or heard, to the preacher in charge; and this idea was given to Mr. Wesley from one of these leaders *voluntarily* informing upon his brethren!

Q. What characters in the Church of Rome do the class *leaders* put you in mind of?

A. The *inquisitors*, whose duty it is to inform upon their brethren to the general of their order.

Q. What meetings are held by these leaders and stewards, and for what purpose?

A. Weekly, with the minister in charge, the leaders to

pay over the money to the stewards, and to report all offenders to the minister.

Q. Did Mr. Wesley ever maintain that these officers, meetings or regulations, were scriptural, or suggested to him by the Scriptures?

A. Never. He never professed to have consulted the Scriptures for his institute or his regulations. The Society gathered to hear him preach. Capt. Foy suggested the class meetings and class leadership to him, by offering himself to be one—another person offered to be steward—and a class leader became an informant; and so was suggested to Mr. Wesley both these officers and their duties, and the class meetings.

Q. Is not the class meeting considered an essential and vital part of the system of Methodism?

A. Yes. "Class meetings are an *essential* part of our system." * * "It is not claimed that they are of divine origin."—Inskip, p. 192.

Q. But does not the discipline require that all those who refuse to attend class shall be excluded, even if devotedly pious persons?

A. Yes. See discipline, section 3, Ans. 2.

Q. Is not this, then, a palpable violation of the commission, if Methodists claim their Society to be a Church of Christ, since they teach the observance of what they themselves admit Christ never commanded, and exclude his followers for not obeying the laws and *traditions* of men, as the class meeting, which *he* has positively forbidden them to do?

A. I think so. If Bishop Soule, and his brethren Andrews, Capers and Paine, whose names subscribe and enjoin the observance of the discipline, claim that Methodism is *t* or *a* Church of Christ, then is it unscriptural in its practice, and they themselves openly and palpably violate the express

command of Christ in the commission, by teaching for observance what Christ has not commanded; and Methodism is a form of Antichrist, opposing as it does Christ's authority.

LETTER XI.

"METHODISM AS IT IS."

INTRODUCTION.

DEAR SIR:—Having briefly sketched "Methodism as it was,"—Wesleyan Methodism originated and designed to be by its author, Mr. John Wesley, I now wish to call your attention to "Methodism as it is," or to American Methodism, as it now exists among us here. This letter is designed only as an introduction to this subject.

I have satisfactorily shown you, and every other candid man, that the scheme of Methodism originated, not with God, but with Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors, and that, too, ten years before he was a converted man, himself confessing it! A Church scheme devised by good men would be bad enough—but one originating with an *unregenerate*, a *wicked* man, as was Wesley, from 1729, the date of the birth of his system until May 24, 1736, is far too earth-born for the tastes of reflecting men.

I have also shown, *most conclusively*, that Mr. Wesley never, for one moment, claimed that he was originating a Church, in *any sense*, nor until the day of his death did he claim—as, sir, I fear you do—that Methodism was a Church of Jesus Christ. It was, in any given place, only a Society

in the Church of England, the object of which was the promotion of personal piety; and it was open to all who sought, both as Christians, to cultivate the graces of the spirit, or as sinners to seek the salvation of their souls.

Only one condition was required in the lifetime of Wesley, a desire to "flee the wrath to come." No Church-rite or ordinance, as baptism, or the Lord's Supper, or ministerial ordination, was administered—it was only a *religious Society*, we repeat, designed to promote the attainment and cultivation of religion, prayer and exhortation—as a simple prayer-meeting of any Church; hence Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Lutherans, or Baptists, could belong to Methodist Societies, as they now can to a Bible Society, and still be Presbyterians and Baptists. Mr. Wesley nor his cotemporaries would have been offended with me had I called his Societies by the name he gave them, Societies, as your brethren now are, but he would have been highly incensed should I have called them churches, or Methodism *a* Church or *the* Church! What a change has taken place in a few short years—not in Methodism, to make it a Church—but in the demands of Methodists upon the charity of Christians!

Methodist Societies in America continued as appendages to the Church of England until the Baltimore Conference of 1784. They claimed only to be *Societies*, not churches or a Church; they did not presume to ordain ministers, to baptize, or to administer the Lord's Supper; the ordinances of the Church were not known among them, more than among the various Bible and Auxiliary Bible Societies of the land. If my statement is denied, I refer to your own historical documents. See Inskip, p. 43:

"The first regular Conference was held in Philadelphia, June, 1773. At this Conference, the authority of Mr. Wes-

ley, and the doctrine and discipline of the Methodists, were formally recognized and adopted. *They also agreed unanimously not to* ADMINISTER THE SACRAMENT, *and all the members were exhorted to attend the Church* (of England) *and to receive the ordinances there.* Methodism then served only as a *great drag-net,* with which to gather in the Church of England!

The close of the revolution marked the passing of Methodism from this, its *chrysalis* state, as it proved to be. Methodism is now, not to be transformed, but to claim a new name and position—its 12,000 Societies are to be made into one Church.

Now, sir, mark the cause of my astonishment, at the *facility* with which it is accomplished, the ease with which a purely *human invention*—a Society set on foot by a man, not professing the slightest conformity to the direction of the Word of God—is made as by a magic word, "the Church of God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

Was the organism of Methodism disturbed? Not in the least. Were the laws and enactments, the polity of Mr. Wesley, laid aside, and the teachings of Christ substituted in their place? Was the authority of Mr. Wesley, as head of the Church and of the ministry, repudiated for the authority of Christ, who is Head over all things to his Church, and the only master of his ministers? Were all those who made no profession of religion—the hosts of the ungodly and wicked, that had been gathered into those Societies, formally excluded from the visible bounds of the new Church? By no means—not one of these changes—all things were allowed to remain as they were from the beginning of Methodism. It was only "resolved" by *sixty Methodist Circuit riders,* not an individual member was consulted in the matter, or had a voice in so momentous a proceeding—it was

the work of ambitious Episcopal deacons and priests, who wished to be Episcopal Bishops, Right Rev. Fathers in God, and Ruling Elders; I say it was determined by them to set up for themselves, as Church dignitaries and Church rulers, and therefore it was simply resolved, that the Societies in America "become a Church, under the name of the Methodist E. Church." See History of Discipline.

They commanded, and Methodism stood fast and forth a Church of Christ, with Messrs. Coke and Asbury as its visible head, clothed in almost pontifical power!! By this simple process—by the passage of a simple resolution did Wesleyan Methodism become Coke and Asburian Methodism, or, as claimed by you, sir, and your cotemporary bishops, the Church of Jesus Christ, which the prophets foretold was to be "cut out without hands," to be set up by the God of heaven, and which Christ himself declared was to be built by himself, and to continue indestructible and unchanged, from his ascension to his second advent.

Bishop Soule, I earnestly and most respectfully appeal to you, sir,—must I believe that human Societies can be thus easily transmuted by a simple vote—by sixty men saying "Aye"—into veritable Churches of Christ, with a right at once to demand fellowship of me and of the Churches of Christ, and that recognition, association, and intercourse, due to veritable Churches of Christ?

It seems to me, sir, seriously and before my God, that your claims upon me and my denomination are preposterous, and, in the sight of heaven, almost *impious*. If I sin in viewing your claims thus, I call upon you, as you love my soul, to make *one effort*, at least, to enlighten and convert me from the error of my ways. Are you not morally bound to do so?

Let us see how this precedent wil work when applied to

other human societies. Suppose at the next Annual Celebration of the Order of Free and Accepted Masons in the United States, this resolution should be proposed:

"Whereas, since it is deemed by us expedient, on account of the age of our order, and to secure its recognition and fellowship by all Christian churches, therefore,

Resolved, That, from henceforth, we will be known and recognized as the Masonic Episcopal Church of the United States; and our Grand High Priests be called, and exercise the functions of, Episcopal Bishops, and the next highest officers exercise the office of Presiding Elders."

Very well. Now let the Odd Fellows do the same, and we have the Odd Fellowship Church. Suppose now, that they resolve to initiate their members by a sprinkling, or pouring, or an immersing ceremony, in which the candidate professes to recognize Jesus Christ as the Son of God—and, also, at stated times, a supper of bread and wine is observed after the manner of the Lord's Supper, would your Christian charity allow you to recognize them as true Churches of Christ? Would you fellowship and recognize them as Christian Churches by inviting their preachers or chaplains into your pulpits? Would you not look upon their act as impious? Would you eat the Lord's Supper with them in token of fellowship? Would you receive their members as baptized? Could the world or those societies justly denounce you and your brethren as illiberal or uncharitable should you refuse to recognize their claims as Churches of Christ? There might be many *good men* in them, and their *High Priests* or chaplains might be even ministers, but would this entitle them to be regarded as *Christian Churches*. Now, sir, the Methodist E. Church stands forth in this light before the world—humam societies, retaining their man-contrived organizations, laws and traditions, terms of admission,

and unregenerated membership, voting themselves the Church of Christ, and demanding recognition and fellowship of all Churches! What is such a society, but a great rival and antagonistic institution to the Church set up by the God of Heaven.

You can understand why I cannot, and why Baptists can either fellowship you at the Supper, or receive those initiated into your societies by the application of water by any mode, or invite your preachers into our pulpits, thereby endorsing your claims before the world. If any Baptists are guilty of any one of the above acts, they are manifestly inconsistent, and do it doubtless through *false charity*, a specious liberality, or pure inconsiderateness.

LETTER XII.

Methodism began in America by a woman—Mr. Wesley falsely charged with forming an Episcopal Church, and ordaining Coke a Bishop—Methodist Episcopacy originated by fraud and forgery—Methodists know not whether Bishops are Bishops or Elders—divided among themselves.

Sir:—It is a fact worthy of notice that Methodism took its successful start in the United States through a woman, an aged Methodist woman, who came over to New York in 1766—her name is lost—in a former company that came over in 1765, were a few who had been once Methodists in England, among whom was one local preacher; but they had all fallen from grace before the old lady's arrival, and Embry was lashed into his duty by her severe reproofs. Thus we see the precious seed deposited already in America through the direct influence of *woman*. See Gorrie, p. 39.

In noticing "Methodism as it is," I begin with the organization of the Methodist E. Church. The *Episcopal* part of the concern was not the conception or design of Wesley —he utterly abhorred Episcopacy—but of Messrs. Coke and Asbury, his American superintendents. We have no right to believe that it is such a Church as he wished or expected

Methodists to organize in this country. Though Mr. Wesley never intended to start a new sect, or to his dying day, wished his followers in England to separate from the Church, yet, America having achieved her independence, and union of Church and State for ever abolished here—and many of his preachers had forsaken *their* Churches—Mr. Wesley gave his consent for American Methodists to form, at a proper time, a separate Church, but when they did so, not to form an *Episcopal* Church, and create *prelatical bishops*—but in his own words in patterning it, to "FOLLOW after (or organize it according to the teachings of) SCRIPTURE, AND THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH." Neither of which did Mr. Wesley believe taught Episcopacy. He says, "But that it (Episcopacy) is prescribed in Scripture, I do not believe." But as the Societies still wished to be under "*his care*," while he lived, he solemnly set apart Dr. Coke as his assistant, to superintend the affairs of the Societies in America.

For the sake of my readers, I will copy his letter to the brethren, informing them what he *had* done, and I hope they will compare it carefully with what you said he *did do*, in the first section of the Discipline:

"BRISTOL, *September* 10, 1784.

"To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury and our brethren in North America.

"By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the mother country, and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the States of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the Congress, partly by the provincial assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In

this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these States desire my advice, and in compliance with their desire I have drawn up a little sketch. Lord King's account of the Primitive Church convinced me, many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise the right, by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the National Church, to which I belonged.

"But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish minister. So that for some hundreds of miles together, there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest.

"I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury, to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, to act as elders among them, by baptizing, and administering the Lord's Supper. And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England, (I think the best constituted National Church in the world,) which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's Day, in all the congregations, reading the Litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord's Day.

"If any one will point out a more rational and Scriptural

way of feeding and guiding these poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present, I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

"It has indeed been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object, 1. I desired the Bishop of London to ordain one, but could not prevail. 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. 3. If they were to ordain them now, they would expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! 4. As our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the State and the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

"JOHN WESLEY."

You certainly cannot affirm, in the face of Mr. Wesley's assertion in this letter, that he believed in *Episcopacy*, though he did think the Church of England the best *National* Church in the world—and I am free to admit it, and yet I believe a *National* or *Episcopal* Church both *unscriptural* and *unapostolical*. Mr. Wesley *distinctly* repudiates the *third* order, and says he was convinced years ago that "bishops and presbyters are the *same order*." Is not this enough? Do you say that he ordained Mr. Coke a *bishop*, when he believed him as much a bishop as himself, before he laid hands on him?! But suppose I show that Mr. Wesley looked upon those ministers who received the title, and exercised the powers of the *third order*, or *prelatical bishops*, in the light of "*heathenish priests* and MITRED INFI-

DELS," will it not be convincing? Hear him: "For these forty years I have been in doubt concerning that question, 'What obedience is due to HEATHENISH PRIESTS and MITRED INFIDELS.'" * * "Some obedience I always paid to BISHOPS in obedience to the laws of the land, but I cannot see that I am under any obligations to obey them farther than those laws require." * * "I submit still to mitred infidels." * *

Now, I have as good grounds to pronounce *you*, sir, and your three fellow-bishops, "*heathenish priests* and *mitred infidels*," as Mr. Wesley had to apply such epithets to the bishops of the Episcopal Church; indeed, if *they* deserved the titles so do *you*, and *all Bishops of Methodism*—but, sir, should I presume to use such language in addressing you, or speaking of you, what an outcry would be heard throughout your Societies in the whole length and breadth of the land. Every *circuit rider* would take this letter for his text at his next appointment.

Must I believe you when you declare in the Discipline that Mr. Wesley did ordain Dr. Coke an Episcopal bishop, and authorized him to ordain Asbury one?

Can you say it in the face of the above? Can you say it in the face of his objugatory letter to Asbury? (see Letter, No. VIII.,) in which he says, "How can you, how DARE YOU suffer yourself to be called a BISHOP? I SHUDDER, I START, at the very thought! Men may call me a *knave* or a *fool;* a RASCAL, a SCOUNDREL, and I am content, but they shall never, with my consent, call me a BISHOP;" and do you say Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury were bishops? Can a servant be greater than his lord? Hear his obsecration to you, *Bishop* Soule, and to your fellows, whom Mr. Wesley would regard as *mitred infidels:* "For *my* sake, for GOD'S sake, for CHRIST'S sake, PUT A FULL END TO THIS!" Will you

listen to his prayer? How could his anguished spirit rest, were he permitted to see "neathenish priests and mitred infidels," ruling and directing the interests of his Societies in America?

Am I, with all the lights before my eyes, to believe *your* declarations in the first section of the Discipline, (1.) That Mr. Wesley did prefer the Episcopacy for his Societies in America (?) (2.) That he did actually ordain Dr. Coke a bishop (?) (3.) That he did deliver to him letters of Episcopal orders (?) and (4.) Authorized him to ordain F. Asbury an *Episcopal bishop* (?) (5.) And that, at "*that time*," the Conference held at Baltimore, did *unanimously* receive them as its *bishops* (?) (6.) And that they were satisfied with their ordinations as Episcopal bishops (?!!!!!)

Why, sir, it would require the faith of a Catholic, who is to believe the Pope, though his teachings flatly contradict the plain declarations of Scripture—he must believe both the Scriptures and the Pope. Must I believe both the facts of history and the bishops?

How can you reconcile your statement in the Discipline with the statements and published writings of Mr. Wesley? I challenge you, or all the learned doctors of your Society to do it! Will you still say MR. WESLEY DID ORDAIN DR. COKE AN EPISCOPAL BISHOP—A MINISTER OF THE THIRD ORDER? Reconcile it with the following facts.

1. You will make Mr. Wesley guilty of creating and ordaining to an order he expressly declares in his works and notes does not exist in the Primitive Churches.

2. But on the supposition that Episcopacy is scriptural, you make him guilty of the profanation of the ordinance—he, a simple presbyter, assay to ordain Coke, who was his equal, a bishop—violating the law of Episcopal ordination, and consequently giving to Methodists a *spurious* Episcopacy.

3. But you make Mr. Wesley guilty of ordaining and placing over his brethren in America, heathenish priests and mitred infidels, as he called the unscriptural order and office of Episcopal bishops, and to require his brethren and ministers here to *obey such!*

But, sir, the plain facts of your histories are against you.

4. Mr. Wesley does not say, as you affirm, that he ordained Coke a bishop of the third order, or "to the episcopal office"—but simply a *superintendent* under him over the Societies in America—he, Wesley, being the father of *all.*

5. Nor does he say so in his letter of appointment.

If positive, unequivocal proof is wanted, even from Wesley himself, that in setting apart Dr. Coke, he had not the most distant thought of organizing a new Church, but only to provide them with ministers, to administer ordinances, *while the Societies continued under his care*, and the members continued *their connection with the Church of England*—here it is in just so many words, and whoever denies it, *impeaches* the *veracity* and *honesty of Mr. Wesley.* Here are "the *letters* of episcopal orders," which you say Mr. Wesley gave to Dr. Coke, which any one can see is only a *letter* of recommendation!

"To all whom these presents shall come, John Wesley, late Fellow of Lincoln College, in Oxford, Presbyter of the Church of England, sendeth greeting:

"Whereas many of the people in the southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the usage of the same church; and whereas there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with ministers:

"Know all men, that I, *John Wesley*, think myself to be providentially called at this time to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America. And, therefore, under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory, I have this day set apart as a superintendent, by the imposition of my hands, and prayer, (being assisted by other ordained ministers,) Thomas Coke, doctor of civil law, a presbyter of the Church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern, as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this second day of September, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four.

"JOHN WESLEY."

Can language be more explicit? Mr. Wesley says, because many of the people desire to be *under his care*, and *still adhere* to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, and have the sacraments administered according to the *usage of the same Church*, and there did not appear to Mr. Wesley any better way to gratify them but by supplying them with ministers; he accordingly recommends Dr. Coke to them, having solemnly set him apart, as we are wont to our departing missionaries to foreign lands, by solemn prayer, &c. From this slight circumstance, you declared that Mr. Wesley ordained Dr. Coke a bishop of the third order, and also constituted a new Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church.

6. He certainly does not give either them or the world to understand that he ordained Coke, or authorized him to ordain Asbury an episcopal bishop, in his objugatory letter to Asbury, (look back and read his letter in Letter VII.) "How

can you, how *dare* you, suffer yourself to be called a BISHOP."

7. But they did not dare to assume the arrogant title until four years after Wesley set them apart or authorized them!

8. The Conference did not receive them as bishops—the title was a *forgery*, surreptitiously foisted into the minutes!

9. When they returned to England they were not received or acknowledged as bishops by Mr. Wesley, or any one else.

10. And, finally, Dr. Coke knew that Wesley did not ordain him a bishop—he was never satisfied that he had Episcopal ordination! Why did he write to Bishop Seabury, and beg him to ordain himself and Asbury bishops, and to White and Seabury to ordain their preachers over again! *Why*, Bishop Soule? In the name and for the honor of the Episcopacy of Methodism break your silence, and answer, if you can answer, *why?*

Ah! sir, the wickedness of his assumption—his daring before heaven and in the sight of the world, preyed upon his conscience, and well nigh drove him mad! Does he not, more than once, in his letter to Bishop White, confess that Wesley never made him a bishop? Does he not confess that he went farther in what he did in America, than Wesley intended? Did he not even offer to return to the Protestant E. Church? Did he not beg Mr. White to keep his letter a *secret*, and *burn* it if the Bishop would not grant his request?* And finally, as a last desperate effort, to be a *real*, and not a *sham*, Bishop, did he not apply to Wilberforce, member of Parliament, and to Lord Liverpool, in 1813, to have him made Bishop of the English Episcopal

* See Coke's letter to White, in White's Memoirs of the P. E. Church, 1st ed. pp. 424–9.

Church in India?! And yet you endorse and publish to the world the first section of the discipline, with these facts before you! I will not pronounce upon the morality of your statement, but, sir, I would rather lose a right arm, or a right eye, than to subscribe my name to such a declaration, with the lights now before me!! Will bishops set such a pattern for their subordinates? Does it require statements at such war with all historical facts, to support Methodist *Episcopacy*, and palm it off upon the credulity of the world?

But to return to the dilemma. You cannot say, as some of your modern writers are beginning to say, in order to escape the difficulty in which they find themselves involved, that *Wesley did not ordain* Coke a "*bona fide*" *Bishop* of *the third order—but a Bishop in office?* This will also involve you in a maze of difficulties.

1. You affirm five times in your discipline that he ordained him an *Episcopal* Bishop!

2. That they were received *as such* by the Conference.

3. That they were fully satisfied with the validity of their *Episcopal ordination!*—Now sir, unless you declare him ordained a *prelatical* bishop—a minister of the *third order*, the language of your discipline is *deceptious*. The terms you use are those belonging to the Church of England, and always mean the *same thing*.

"*Episcopal office*," always means the office of a prelatical bishop.

"*To set apart for Episcopal office*," means to ordain a presbyter such a bishop.

"*Letters of Episcopal order*," means the credentials of the newly made bishop.

In your discipline you use the very language and phrases of the Church of England to say that Mr. Wesley made Coke a prelatical bishop and in your office for the ordination of a

bishop, you copy the *very office* of the Church of England—you prescribe *three distinct ordinations* and give him supreme jurisdiction over all the inferior ministers, and compel them to take an oath of reverence and obedience to "obey in all things." But, you are forced to admit that you claim for Methodist Bishops the honor of being *Episcopal* Bishops of the first water—ministers the third *order*, (Mr. Wesley's heathenish priests!)

Dr. Emory says: "In whatever sense distinct ordinations constitute ORDERS, in the same sense Mr. Wesley certainly intended that we should have *three orders*. For he undoubtedly instituted *three distinct ordinations*."

Drs. Emory and Bangs say: "THREE ORDERS of ministers *are* recognized, and the duties peculiar to each are clearly defined." It is clear as noon day that Methodist Episcopacy is *spurious*, and the palming of it off upon the world a *fraudulent* operation performed by an ambitious, aspiring and power-loving clergy, had we no other facts than those above presented.

One word, to save Mr. Wesley from the charges of these self-appointed Bishops and rulers.

I do not believe that he ordained Mr. Coke a Bishop, he only formally set him apart by prayer for his assistant superintendent over the poor sheep in the wilderness—until such time as they should see fit to organize a distinct Church, and then he wished them to follow the Scripture and Apostolic Church, which Mr. Wesley did not believe recognized an Episcopal Bishop any more than a priest or "mitred infidel."

He had no thought of ordaining a Bishop or forming a Church.

In this I agree with an Episcopalian writer and Mr. Taylor in his late work. It is the only charitable opinion that can be passed in favor of Mr. Wesley: "The idea of ordain-

ing a *Bishop* for the infant Church in America, never entered Wesley's mind," and "he never conceived of the idea of organizing through him (Dr. Coke) an Episcopal Church in America."—Strickland on Methodism, quoted by Gorrie, p. 218

It is asked of me to expose the falsehood and clerical intrigue that gave birth to "METHODISM AS IT IS?"

The humble title of superintendents under Mr. Wesley failed to satisfy Messrs. Coke and Asbury. They aspired for clerical power and coveted the imposing title of the English Bishops and their aristocratic rule and rank, and determined to secure by a "*coup d'etat.*" The chicanery and fraud by which they accomplished it, we will allow a standard *Methodist historian* to relate in his own language. We quote from Jesse Lee, author of "Short History of Methodism." "In the course of this year, 1787, (three years after Conference,) Mr. Asbury *reprinted* the General Minutes; *but in a different form from what they were before.* The title of the pamphlet was as follows. A form of Discipline for the ministers, preachers, and members of the Methodist E. Church in America, CONSIDERED and approved at a Conference held in Baltimore in the State of Maryland, the 27th December, 1784, the third question in the second section, and answer thus: Ques. Is there any other business to be done in Conference? Ans. The election and ordaining of Bishops, Elders, and Deacons. "*This,*" says Mr. Lee, "*was the first time* OUR SUPERINTENDENTS EVER GAVE THEMSELVES the self-constituted title of Bishops, in the Minutes. THEY (Coke and Asbury) CHANGED THE TITLE THEMSELVES WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF CONFERENCE." Now you understand why I speak of Methodist Bishops as SELF-APPOINTED, and too often *self-important* rulers. Who made them to differ from their brethren?

"At the *next* conference," says Mr. Lee, they (Coke and Asbury,) asked the *preachers* if the word *Bishop* might

stand in the minutes; seeing that it was a scriptural name, (all *false*, it is not in the word of God,) and the meaning of the word Bishop was the same as that of *superintendent*." Here was deception palmed off upon their more ignorant brethren. A scriptural superintendent, overseer or pastor, and an *Anglican* Episcopal or *Methodist* Episcopal Bishop, are as different as the pastor of a Baptist Church, and the Roman Pontiff! "*Some of the preachers opposed the alteration* and wished to retain the former title, but a majority of the preachers agreed to let the *word Bishop* remain." Now, Mr. Soule, will you declare to your followers in the face of this, that "at which time (Dec., 1784,) the General Conference, held in Baltimore, DID UNANIMOUSLY receive the said T. Coke and F. Asbury as their Bishops." Either you and your fellow Bishops publish a false statement to the world, or your own histories are not reliable. There is *fraud* somewhere. Look at Mr. Lee's testimony. He clearly shows that a fraud was perpetrated by Asbury, in the first instance, to get himself recognized as a Bishop! No less a *fraud* than deliberately altering the minutes of Conference, to make it appear to the world that they (Coke and Asbury,) had been recognized as Bishops by the Conference *four years* before—since the first foundation of the Methodist Church, in 1784! Which was not the case, because Wesley did not ordain them *Bishops*, but only *his* superintendents, and the first Conference did not at all, and never did unanimously receive them as Bishops! And this change of their title for this purpose—a fraud designed to perpetrate a deception—took place in 1787! Thus was consummated one of the most startling FRAUDS and FALSEHOODS in modern times. Jesuitism never surpassed it in palming off the bones of malefactors for the *relics* of saints! It was in this way Methodists in America have been, and

still are, deceived. And what is equally surprising, and *startling*, the fraud is actually perpetrated to the present day!

The hand that forged the minutes may have written the first section of the discipline,—it matters not, but do you not, Bishop Soule, and your fellow-rulers, perpetuate the fraud and the falsehood, by publishing the section under your signatures?* Will the world allow this always to be unrepudiated? Will the honest Christian membership of your own Society? Will they not call upon you to explain satisfactorily or repudiate both your declarations and priestly jurisdictions? Will you not deign to inform the world whether you are a bishop, a minister of the third order, or simply a minister of the first order—*i. e.* of *one* ordination? Why are you a *prelatical* bishop in your discipline, in ordinations in *order* and in *authority*, and yet claim before the world that you are only a *simple presbyter?!!* Is such a policy fair dealing? Will not these questions be asked, and thus answered? Who devised the Methodist E. Church? Ans. Messrs. Coke and Asbury. How was the Episcopacy and order and title of bishop introduced into the Church—when it was never known in the Societies? It was introduced by *clerical fraud* and falsehood, the order and the title was assumed by the first bishops, and the minutes of conference forged, to make the world believe that they were so received by the first Conference. Did the founders of the Methodist E. Church do this? They did, knowingly and wilfully, with intent to deceive future Methodists. Is the falsehood still perpetuated, and Methodists still deceived? It is, by the unqualified endorsement of Joshua Soule, J. P.

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* If any one thinks my language unwarrantably severe, we refer him back to the declaration of Bishop Bascom in the last letter.

O. Andrews, Wm. Capers, and Robert Paine. I close this letter with the conviction that such men as Coke and Asbury were not ——— qualified to found a Church of Christ, and I cannot recognize Methodism as such, and call the attention of my readers to an instance of the *craft, cunning, intrigue, fraud* and *imposition*, which have marked the beginning of all aristocracies and hierarchies and clerical usurpation that have ever *oppressed humanity,* opposed *christianity,* or *darkened* the world.

LETTER XIII.

Methodism claims for Mr. Wesley and for its Bishops the "divine right of Kings"—that Mr. Wesley founded the Methodist Church in America, and the Bishops rule it, by the "special grace of God"—Methodism still holds and teaches the Popish doctrine of order and succession.

Dear Sir:—It was made evident, in my last letter, that the first bishops of Methodism were *self-appointed*, and that the Methodist E. Church was organized by them, yet to screen themselves they charged it upon Mr. Wesley. That he, a simple presbyter in the Church of England, presumed to ordain a *fellow-presbyter* for a bishop. The question now properly comes up, By what right did he do it? What right do Methodists claim for him?

Do they claim that Mr. Wesley had any *ecclesiastical* authority from the Church of England? They admit he had none.

Did the civil magistrate grant him leave? It is not claimed.

Did they claim that Mr. Wesley took the authority from his *own private views of Episcopacy*, and the right of presbyters to ordain a bishop of the *third* order. Nothing is more clearly established than that Mr. Wesley did not believe in the third order; that he abhorred it; that he deemed it al-

most, if not quite, sacrilegious for a minister to assume and exercise the rank and jurisdiction of a prelatical bishop; that he spoke of them as "heathenish priests and mitred infidels." He did not feel himself authorized to ordain one, or to choose and appoint Episcopacy for his societies.

Will Methodists claim that Mr. Wesley was warranted by the Scriptures to ordain a *prelatical* bishop? They cannot. They do not only teach that the Bible does not warrant such an officer, but violently opposes the existence and Antichristian rank, and spiritual jurisdiction of such a lordling.

But have they such an order of ministers? Methodism is divided about it. The conference editors and *small* doctors of divinity, book-writers like Mr. Hinkle, McFerrin, Inskip, Gorrie, *et cum multis aliis*, deny, in the very face of their Discipline, that they have a third *order*, and the mass of Methodists believe them; while the bishops and the learned doctors of Methodism maintain that the bishops are veritable Popish ones of the third order, and by three ordinations!

Hear Dr. EMORY: "In whatever sense *distinct ordinations constitute distinct orders* [not *office!*] in the same sense Mr. Wesley certainly intended that we should have THREE ORDERS, for he undeniably instituted three ordinations."* *Orders*, not *offices*.

Hear Dr. EMORY and Dr. BANGS *conjointly*: "THREE ORDERS of ministers are recognized, and the duties peculiar to each are certainly defined."† And Methodists believe their learned doctors and historians of course! Does it not require an unreasonable amount of credulity to be a Methodist?

But Mr. Wesley must have had authority from some

* Emory's Def. of Fathers, sec. 7.

† Art. by Bangs and Emory. Buck's Th. Dic., 1825.

source, and since it is not allowed by either Episcopacy or by Scripture and they teach and hold that God gave Mr. Wesley the *grace to usurp the special right* to exercise the authority and to transmit it in *regular succession* of bishops to posterity! This exalts the mission of Mr. Wesley to a dignity equal to Paul's.

Dr. Bangs claims that Mr. Wesley had a divine call to found Methodism, and that God sanctioned him in the work! So Mr. Alexander Campbell doubtless considers that he has one. See Bangs' Original Church, p. 106.

Mr. Inskip regards Mr. Wesley as especially raised up by God. "To meet the emergency which then existed, God raised up a company of great men, &c.,—the Wesleys, Coke and Asbury, &c. These MEN DEVISED this powerful instrumentality, *i. e.*, Methodism. Page 54.

"Methodism is a creation of *Providence*," *i. e.*, of God, since there is no *chance*. Its claims, are then, all as sacred as God's word! Mr. Gorrie claims that Mr. Wesley acted under the *especial direction*, inspiration, or sanction of God. Page 215. "As Mr. Wesley, UNDER GOD, was the founder of the Methodist Societies." If Mr. Wesley indeed acted "under God" in what he did, then is his Discipline (the first section excepted) as authoritative as the New Testament, and ought to be added to it and follow the Book of Revelations! Methodists act upon this belief, we suppose,, when they exclude a member for not observing the laws of Mr. Wesley, though they do not violate any of the laws of Jesus Christ!

The bishops first taught and still encourage these writers to teach the "idea that Methodism is a new Church, founded by Mr. Wesley, under the special sanction and direction of God!" "We believe that God's design in raising up the preachers called Methodists," &c. Dis. p. 8.

"GOD THEN THRUST THEM OUT to raise up a holy people." Dis. p. 7.

"Our venerable friend, who UNDER GOD, had been the father," &c.

Methodist editors freely admit Mr. Wesley's "*divine call.*" "As the father of Methodism, he had the *right*, of priority and seniority in the Methodist Societies, and as he deemed himself *called by Divine Providence*, to provide an ordained ministry and *form* of Government."* Was not his mission then inspired and equal to any apostle?

What do these bishops and writers teach that God called Mr. Wesley to do? Why, "*under God*," to ordain an episcopal bishop, and place him over his Societies, when under the illumination, inspiration or guidance of the *same spirit*, he did not believe that such an order was taught by Scripture, or existed in the Primitive Churches—indeed, was abhorrent to his own feelings! This spirit was as inconsistent with itself as are the spirits of the "rappers" in our own day!

But the chief ministers of Methodism—the bishops and elders, persuade the people that they have some divine or superior right to govern them—that this power or right is given them by the Saviour or some one. Notice the phraseology of the language used in ordaining a Methodist preacher.

Suppose him abjectly bowed to the very feet of his "chief ministers" who interrogate him, "Will you reverently obey your chief ministers TO WHOM IS COMMITTED THE CARE AND GOVERNMENT OVER YOU."

Do not these chief ministers claim that it is committed to them to rule *gratia divino* or *jure divino?* This is the divine right plead by kings, popes and despots, &c.

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* Methodist Episcopalian.

Do you say that this power or right is committed to the chief ministers, by Wesley? He had no more authority to invest a Methodist preacher with the absolute government of two or two thousand other preachers, than I have to elect the king of France. Man is only man's equal, in Church or State.

Do you say the people conferred this authority upon the bishops? The people have not now and never had any voice in the creation of a Methodist bishop, or in the election of a presiding elder or any minister of Methodism, as such. They never gave to any man this right.

Who then, *called*, and therefore conferred upon Methodist bishops this fearful ministration of absolute power? By whom do they teach their people they were called? See the office for their ordination, page 223. The candidate for the bishoprick, is asked by a bishop, "Are you persuaded that you are TRULY CALLED to this ministration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ?"

Ans. "I am so persuaded." If he is truly called by the grace and will of Christ, then woe is *him* if he does not *govern*. And mark it, he is not called to *preach* to save sinners—no, no such menial labor—he feels called to govern—to rule with absolute and pontifical sway, the laborious preachers.

But if we look into the prayers used upon one of these occasions, we can learn the claimed source of this power.

"Almighty God, giver of all good things, (this implies that the order or grace of a bishop is a good *thing*,) who by thy Holy Spirit hast appointed DIVERS ORDERS of ministers in thy Church, (this is certainly false which I prove by Methodist publications*) mercifully behold this THY servant

* "On the whole, we think it apparent, that bishops, presbyters, and

(another mistake) now *called* to the work and ministry of a bishop," &c. Called by whom? See question above. "By the will of our Lord Jesus Christ." At what particular point of time is one of these favorites of Heaven indued with this supernatural right, or grace, or power. When the Holy *Ghost* is given to him. In what way does it come—through what medium is it conferred? Through the hands of a bishop and two elders. Read page 137. Upon the head of the kneeling candidate they lay their hands and pronounce the charmed words, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a bishop of the Church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*" [This is altered in the new editions].

"And remember that thou stir up the *grace of God* [here it is at last, the plea of kings and popes! which is given thee—how, by whom?—*by the imposition of our hands*—and what an imposition!]—for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of POWER, and love and soberness."

We have sufficiently shown that the rulers of Methodism rule by the same right, claimed by the principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in all the high places of earth—the grace of God—a divine right—which is false, and as dishonoring to God as it is impious.

Destroy this forged and iniquitous charter of tyrants, temporal and ecclesiastical, and Episcopal Methodism with all the soul-crushing tyrannies and habitations of cruelties with which humanity is now cursed, would fall.

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pastors, were originally the same. Hence, affectionate salutation is sent to a Church, with its bishops and deacons." Philadelphia Tract, No. 312, published by the Methodist Episcopal Church, 200 Mulberry Street.

Then why a third distinct ordination if an elder is of the same order with the bishop? If it is only an office to which he is raised, why use the very form of ordaining to a third order the order of prelatical bishop used by the Church of England?

Do Methodists claim and teach people the doctrine of SUCCESSION also? Most certainly. We call Jesse Lee to the stand. "The bishops introduced a question in the annual minutes, which was as follows: Ques. Who are the persons who exercise the episcopal office in the Methodist Church in Europe and America?"

Ans. "John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and F. Asbury, by regular *order and succession*." What a fabrication of Messrs. Coke and Asbury! What an unhallowed scheme in them to usurp the office and authority of bishops! Bishop John Wesley! He said he had rather be called a *rascal* or a *scoundrel;* and well he might!

Mr. Inskip says: "Our design is to show, that it is our duty, as ministers of Christ, and the SUCCESSORS of the apostles and JOHN WESLEY!"

Here we have the doctrine of regular *order and succession* from the *apostle* John Wesley, first bishop down to Joshua Soule.

But do Methodists teach that Mr. Wesley did design to perpetuate and *transmit* a succession of bishops? Most assuredly.

"In conformity with this view he deemed it necessary to PERPETUATE the *authority* among the Methodist preachers in America, that there should be in *the first instance* a general superintendent appointed to *transmit* that authority to posterity."

Does not this look a little Popish?

The presbyters, or in the scriptural vocabulary of Metho-

dism, the *elders*, whom he ordained for America, were not *invested* with *that authority*, but Dr. Coke, the superintendent, *was!* How did Dr. Coke possess the grace of imparting the grace of a bishop? Evidently because, it is claimed, that he received it from Wesley, and Wesley received it from God *direct!* How do these bishops teach us that this grace is transmitted? Why, sir, like animal magnetism, through the hands or fingers of one bishop into the *head* of another. The *head*, not the *heart*, is the peculiar receptacle of this grace. If I am thought as making light of holy things, turn to Dis. p. 229, and read the way the new-made bishop receives the grace. [This is also changed].

"Then the Bishop and elders present shall lay their hands on the *head* of the elected persons, kneeling before them upon his knees—[it is an awfully solemn affair! *kneeling* upon his *knees*, to be sure!]—the Bishop saying, "Receive the Holy Ghost—[blasphemy, is it not?]—for the office and work of a Bishop of the Church of God [of Mr. Wesley] now committed unto thee BY THE IMPOSITION OF OUR HANDS, in the name of the Father, [if in the name means, by the authority of, as it does, this is a daring falsehood!] and of the Son, [this is another,] and of the Holy Ghost, [this is anther, three!] And remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is given thee, [how is the *grace* of God bestowed?] *by this imposition of our hands!*" In the name of Luther, do Protestants teach in the nineteenth century one of the most blasphemous doctrines of Rome, that her priests can perform *miracles*, and impart by blessing, by prayers, or by the *imposition* of their hands, the very *grace* of God?! *Monstrous! monstrous!* It is priestcraft run mad!! But this is not all the teaching of that imposition, "for *God* hath not given *us* the spirit of fear, but of POWER, and love and soberness!" The reader can see that the terms "fear, love and soberness"

are only put in as a sort of setting for the bishop's gem, "POWER"—they mean nothing in the connection. What is the doctrine of Methodist Episcopacy? That God gave to Wesley the *grace* to teach and rule as he did, (as) the first bishop of the new-latter-day-Zion, and that Wesley transmitted this invisible grace to the head of Coke, by the imposition of his hands, and Coke imparted it to the head of Asbury, and so the *imposition* has been passed along down to the last person you and your fellow bishops *imposed* upon. Now, sir, I do before Almighty God, and before the whole world, pronounce the whole of this third order, Episcopacy, ordination, and succession, and transmission of the grace of God through the fingers of priests, high-handed priestcraft, and an *imposition* upon the million of Methodists in America. I challenge contradiction. No one will dare to defend the doctrine that priests, whether in Papal or Protestant Rome, can impart the "grace of God," or the "divine right" to lord it over God's heritage, by the imposition of their hands; or to prove to me, or to the world, and hundreds of enquiring Methodists, that God hath given them the "spirit of POWER," thus to do. I unhesitatingly affirm that it is the monstrous doctrine of the Roman Catholic and Greek Apostacies—it is Popery in essence. It is the Popery of Protestantism!

Look at it? What is that doctrine? Simply this: "that Christ gave to his Apostles the right and grace of ordination, and through them transmitted this right to the first Bishop, the third of three orders of ministers, by *succession*, down to the present time." Thus the High Churchman tells us.

Christ called Peter, and authorized him to transmit the mysterious *grace*, and *power*, and *right* of ordination to Linus, next bishop at Rome, and he to Cletus, and he to Clement, &c., &c., &c., down to the present Archbishop of Canterbury. "Why" a writer asks, "do these go back some 1800

years to get this succession from Christ?" Evidently, because Christ is *that far off from them.* But, according to Methodists, Christ was not so far off from Mr. Wesley. Oh, no, he "*called*" Mr. Wesley, and made him, by special favor, as much a bishop as the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Roman Pontiff! Well may Mr. Wesley reject the line of succession back to *Peter.* He is the Peter of Methodism.

They may reject the old doctrine of apostolic succession farther back than Mr. Wesley, for he is their *apostle,* and we affirm as much an apostle as was Paul, if the testimony of Methodist writers and historians can be believed!!

In concluding the subject of this letter and the one preceding it, you will perceive that I have exposed the fruitful seeds and germs of Popery. I have proved:

1. That Mr. Wesley never ordained Dr. Coke a bishop—the *third* of three *orders*—deacon, presbyter, bishop, and that the statements of the Discipline (sec. 1,) are *falsehoods and impositions upon the world.*

2. I have shown that a bishop in the Methodist Society, as his validity is recognized in the Discipline, and as is explained by Drs. Emory, Bangs, and other standard writers, is a bishop of the *third order*, by divine call and regular succession in the new and divinely appointed line from John Wesley.

3. I have consequently shown that Methodists hold and teach the "*divine right*" of Mr. Wesley and all other bishops.

4. That they teach the papal doctrine of *succession.*

Finally, we can see from the instructive history presented in the assumptions of the Methodist bishops, the way in which the Roman Episcopacy *begun*, i. e. by *management,* fraud, and deception, and usurpation—*little* by *little*, until it became the overwhelming despotism of the world.

LETTER XV.

THE POLITICS OF METHODISM.

'We are no Republicans, and never intend to be."—*Wesley.*

SIR:—We have seen how the Methodist Episcopal Church was brought into being. Messrs. Coke and Asbury adopted the Book of Discipline prepared by Mr. Wesley *for his societies*—not for a *church*—and making the proper additions, it became the statute book, the NEW TESTAMENT, of Methodists!

The subject of my inquiry in this letter is, what is the character of the government of this new society? is it republican, and so harmonizing with our institutions, and cultivating republican sentiments in the hearts of its members, or is it despotic and hierarchical, and so antagonistic to all that is republican? This, sir, I conceive to be a matter of momentous importance, and should deeply concern every patriotic American Christian or citizen. The time is coming when they will be compelled to concern themselves, and it may then be too late, when Papal and Protestant hierarchism conspiring, shall have overthrown our civil and religious liberties.

The Discipline of Mr. Wesley's societies was adopted with unimportant changes, as the statute book of the new Church, and that Discipline is a "rod of iron," comprising the laws of the *purest*, most *perfect* and *oppressive despotism.*

What was methodism prior to its being claimed as a Church, and what were the political views of Mr. Wesley, and of his American preachers?

Mr. WESLEY DECLARED HIMSELF AN ENEMY OF BOTH CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY!!

He was a most *violent opposer* of our fathers in their struggle for independence. He was a most bitter maligner, and asperser, and *libeller* of the character of our revolutionary heroes and patriots. Did he not publicly denounce John Hancock, the then President of the American Congress, with being a "smuggler" and a "FELON?" Did he not charge him with having smuggled tea at noonday into Boston; and then, not to lose by his cargo, employing persons in disguise to throw into the sea the other tea, which came from London? And when asked, "Do you compare Mr. Hancock to a felon," did he not answer, "I do in this respect—I compare every smuggler to a felon—a private smuggler to a sneaking felon, a pickpocket—a noonday smuggler to a bold felon, a robber on the highway. And is a person of this *undeniable character* is made President of a Congress, I leave every man of sense to determine what is to be expected of them.—See Wesley's Works.

Let no Methodist censure me for rebuking spiritual wickedness in high places, when they allow of such language from Mr. Wesley, in slandering one of the purest patriots who struggled for our glorious liberties.

Mr. Wesley wrote and preached in scorn against all the principles of liberty, for which Hancock, Washington, and Jefferson contended, and did all in his power to counteract the influence of American and British mind—did all in his power to urge on the mother country to crush the infant colonies, and destroy the traitors and rebels—and did all that he could by his pen and mighty influence over American

Methodists, to encourage them to aid the tories here, or remain true to England. We copy a few of his political sentiments:

"The supposition that the *people* are the origin of power, is every way indefensible." "You (Americans) profess to be contending for liberty, but it is a vain, empty profession." "No governments under heaven are so DESPOTIC as the REPUBLICAN; no subjects are governed in so arbitrary a manner as those of a commonwealth." "Should any man talk or write of the Dutch Government as every *cobbler* does of the English, he would be laid in irons before he knew where he was. *And wo be unto him.* Republics show no mercy," &c.

One more to cap the climax: "Probably that subtle spirit (the devil) hoped by adding to all those vices, the spirit of INDEPENDENCE, to have overturned the whole work of God (i. e. Methodism!) as well as the British government in North America." Again, "the spirit of independence, which our poet so justly terms 'the glorious fruit of angels and of gods,' (that is in plain terms, of devils,) the same which so many call *liberty*, is overruled by the justice and mercy of God."*

What does Mr. Wesley teach in the above, but that the overthrow of English despotism and the establishment of civil and religious liberty here, was the WORK OF DEVILS! What then? Our fathers who fought and the heroes who bled for our liberties, were in Mr. Wesley's opinion, DEVILS!! and Methodists taught so to regard them! Do you, Bishop Soule, so regard them to-day? Does your Society so regard them? If not, I ask you in the name of every American Christian and patriot, why do you *still print and circulate*

* Let the reader, if he wishes to see more, read Mr. Wesley's sermon on "National Sins and Miseries."

publications containing such sentiments throughout the length and breadth of this free land?!

It is not strange that all the Methodist preachers in this country were *tories*, and either returned to England, or took refuge among the tories. Mr. Asbury concealed himself among the tories of the State of Delaware!*

But it is proper to enquire what were Mr. Wesley's religious views of government! Was he a Despot or Republican? Did he understand that the discipline enjoined a republican form of government? Did he consider his societies republican, or intend them to be? See his letter to Mr. Mason, January 13, 1790:

"My Dear Brother:—As long as I live, the people shall have no share in choosing either stewards or leaders among the Methodists. We have not nor never had, any such customs. We are no republicans, and never intend to be. I would be better for those who are *so* minded to go quietly away."† Mr. Wesley spake the truth. Methodists to-day in church matters are no more republicans than they were when Mr. Wesley wrote the above. Do your *people* elect their *leaders* or *stewards*, or even the *trustees* to their *meeting-houses?*

We could not look for such a monarchist and enemy of Republican principles, as was Mr. Wesley, to establish a religious society upon other than despotic or monarchical principles!

What is the character of the government of Methodism? We will allow the late eloquent Cookman, a Methodist preacher of the Baltimore Conference, and Chaplain to the Senate of the United States, to illustrate it.

In his speeches, pp. 145–6, comparing Methodism to a wheel within a wheel, he says:

* See Wesley's Life of Asbury. † Wesley's Works, vol. 7, p. 98.

"Now, sir, let us apply this to Methodism. The *great iron wheel* in the system is *itinerancy;* and truly *it grinds some of us tremendously!* the *brazen wheel*, attached and kept in motion by the former, is the *local ministry;* the *golden wheel*, the *doctrine and discipline of the Church*, in full and successful operation. Now, sir, it is evident that the entire movement depends upon keeping the *great iron wheel of itinerancy* constantly and rapidly rolling round. But, to be more specific, and to make an application of this figure to American Methodism, let us carefully note the admirable and astounding movements of this wonderful machine. You will perceive there are wheels within wheels. *First, there is the great outer wheel of Episcopacy*, which accomplishes its entire revolution *once* in *four* years. To this there are attached *twenty-eight smaller wheels* styled *annual conferences*, moving around *once a year;* to these are attached *one hundred wheels*, designated *presiding elders*, moving *twelve hundred other wheels*, termed *quarterly conferences*, every *three* months: to these are attached *four thousand wheels*, styled *travelling preachers*, moving round *once a month*, and communicating motion to *thirty thousand* wheels, called *class leaders*, moving round *once a week*, and who in turn, being attached to between *seven and eight hundred thousand wheels*, called *members*, give a sufficient impulse to whirl them round *every day.* O, sir, what a machine is this!"

Truly, "what a machine is this!" We say to every one, "Let us carefully note the admirable and astounding movements of this wonderful machine!" How potent for good —*if controlled by angels!* How omnipotent for evil — *if turned by men!*—Why, in essential character, it is the very system of the Jesuits of Rome! It is, *in principle*, a crushing military *despotism.* It *is astounding!* It is *astounding* that any set of men, after the American revolution, should

have dared to fabricate, and set in motion, this *great Iron Wheel of Episcopacy!* Just look at it, and you see it is a perfect system of *passive obedience and non-resistance.* Every *smaller wheel* being "ATTACHED" to the wheel next in power above it, and the whole moving in absolute control of the GREAT OUTER WHEEL OF EPISCOPACY. The reflecting man must see on a glance, that *all real liberty of thought and action is destroyed, as truly, by this system, as by the ecclesiastical system of Rome—as by the drill of an army—as by any despotism upon the face of the earth.*

LETTER XV.

Methodism a Great Iron Wheel—a Clerical Despotism, and yet American Christians tolerate and support it!

SIR:—If, in my last letter to you, I seemed to use an unbecoming figure, in comparing Methodism to a "*Great Iron Wheel*," you must remember that the comparison was not mine, but one of your own most popular ministers, and since I write not *for you*, so much as *to you for others*, I beg the reader to examine the wonderful and astounding *machine* of American Methodism once more. Here it is from the lips of your own eloquent Cookman.

"You will perceive there are 'wheels within wheels.' First. There is the great outer wheel of episcopacy, which accomplishes its entire revolution *once in four years*. To this are attached *twenty-eight* smaller wheels, styled *annual conferences*, moving round *once a year;* to those are attached *one hundred wheels*, *designated presiding elders*, *moving twelve hundred other wheels*, termed *quarterly conferences*, every *three months;* to these are attached *four thousand wheels*, styled *travelling preachers*, moving round *once a month*, and communicating motion to *thirty thousand wheels*, called *class-leaders*, moving round *once a week*, and who, in turn, being attached to between *seven and eight hundred thousand wheels*,

called *members*, give a sufficient impulse to whirl them around *every day*. What a machine is this?—*Cookman.*

Here we see that each wheel is a *passive thing*, turned by a power above it, and it forced by this superior power to whirl the wheel below attached to it, until the last wheels act upon the people to whirl *them* around each day! What is Methodism but a perfect system of *passive obedience* and *non-resistance?* The *great driving, all-controlling and all-directing power* is in the GREAT OUTER WHEEL—the bishops. What is it but a *monstrous system of clerical absolutism!* the most fearful Hierarchism on the face of the earth? A distinguished Presbyterian writer and editor of the Calvinistic Magazine,* has thus forcibly commented upon Mr. Cookman's "Great Iron Wheel." "It is astounding that any set of men, after the American revolution, should have dared to fabricate, and set in motion, this great Iron Wheel of despotism." But it is not this that astonishes me—knowing the authors of it were ambitious priests; but it *is* astounding to me, beyond my power to describe, how one million of American freemen—patriot Christians—the *sons* and *daughters* of revolutionary heroes, can be made "to be whirled around every day" at the pleasure of a class of petty spiritual rulers and lordlings?—to be the merest puppets ever wired, or worked by stagemen! It is this that astonishes *me* beyond measure, and the reflection *sickens my very heart.* Oh, my country, my country!—how much it is to be feared for thy liberties from these! Oh, religion—what an astounding machine, managed by ambitious and designing priests, is at work to overthrow thee!

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* F. A. Ross, D.D., pastor of Pres. Church, Chattanooga, Tenn. Mr Ross is sustained in his views by the most eminent members and professors at Princeton, and by Presbyterians generally.

METHODISM MECHANICALLY ILLUSTRATED.

Republicanism Backwards; or, Methodism according to Cookman.—Page 160.

Do you say that it is because it is not the *grinding machine* that Mr. Cookman represented it, that your members support it? Methodism is so declared to be by a *living bishop!* In 1844, the General Conference, the "Outer Wheel," suspended Bishop Andrew by an arbitrary act. Mr. Hamline sustained the act, and argued, that the Conference had the power.

"Mr. Hamline argued, that the General Conference had the power to suspend the Bishop, in a summary manner, without trial—because, according to the genius of the Methodist system, every officer, *under the Bishop*, could be thus suspended, or removed from office. He affirmed, that the *Class-Leader* could be removed by the *Itinerant Pastor*—the *Itinerant Pastor* by the *Presiding Elder* or *Bishop*—the *Presiding Elder* by the *Bishop—at any time* during the interval of Conference." Mr. Hamline summed up his evidence by saying, that the Methodist system of removal or suspension was '*peculiar.*'

"First. That suspension, removal, or deposition from office, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, is '*summary.*' '*Without accusation, trial, or formal sentence. Ministerial, not judicial.*'

"Secondly. '*It is for no crime, generally for no misdmeanor but for being unacceptable.*'

"Thirdly. That '*most of the removals are by a sole agent, namely, by a Bishop, a Preacher whose will is omnipotent in the premises.*'

"Fourthly. That '*the moving officer is not legally obliged to assign any cause for despotism. If he do so, it is through courtesy, and not of right.*'

"Fifthly. That '*the deposed has no appeal*'—that '*if indiscreetly or unnecessarily removed, he must submit; for there is no tribunal authorized to cure the error, or rectify the wrong.*'

"This system, Mr. Hamline acknowledges, is one of surpassing energy, and centralizing of power—and he pronounces it 'WORTHY OF ALL EULOGY.'

"There is the system—from the lips of a Methodist Preacher—now a Methodist Bishop! Look at it, ye sober and reflecting lovers of religious liberty, and civil too.—Look at it, ye members of the Methodist Church. Look at it. What! A system '*worthy of all eulogy!*' What say *you*, Genius of America? She answers, '*The Methodist system is death to all the institutions for which Washington fought and freemen died!*' What says the Gospel? The Gospel tells us, '*The Methodist system is Antichrist,—For it is the very identical priestly power which has crushed and trodden under foot the liberty wherewith Christ doth make free, in every age of the world!*' Worthy of all eulogy! Look at it—eight hundred thousand members, *attached* to *thirty thousand class leaders*, and every one of these thirty thousand class leaders holding his office at the mere discretion of some one of four thousand travelling Preachers, and every one of these four thousand itinerant Preachers moving in his circuit, at the *omnipotent* will of some one of a hundred presiding Elders—and every one of these hundred presiding Elders holding his station at the mere pleasure of some one of a half dozen bishops;—and when *summarily removed from office*, none may ask the reason why, nor the despot the reason give! And this is the system, lauded by those who wield it, as 'worthy of all eulogy!' This is said in the United States—and American freemen—not foreign Roman Catholics, tolerate, aye, submit to the usurpation!

"Will it be said, in reply to these remarks, that the General Conference was divided on the resolution advocated by Mr. Hamline? And that the *Methodist Episcopal Church South*, does not sanction the views of Mr. Hamline? But

we will not have dust cast in our eyes. Those who now constitute the Methodist Church *South*, denied the applicability of Mr. Hamline's summary process *to the bishops*, on the part of the General Conference, but admitted, (so far as we understand,) the correctness of Mr. Hamline's interpretation of their Discipline, *as to all the officers below the bishops*. But let us press this point a little farther. We will ask some questions.

"1. Mr. Hamline and the General Conference say, that removal from office in the Methodist Church is 'PECULIAR.'

"2. Mr. Hamline and the General Conference say, it is 'SUMMARY'—'*without accusation, trial, or formal sentence—ministerial, not judicial.*' Will you deny it?

"3. Mr. Hamline and the General Conference say, '*removals are for no crime, generally for no misdemeanor, but for being unacceptable.*' Will you deny it?

"4. Mr. Hamline and the General Conference say, that '*most removals are by a sole agent, namely, a bishop or a preacher, whose will is omnipotent in the premises.*' Will you deny it?

"5. Mr. Hamline and the General Conference say, that '*the removing officer is not legally obliged to assign any cause for deposing. If he do so, it is through courtesy, and not of right.*' Will you deny it?

"6. Mr. Hamline and the General Conference say, that '*the deposed officer has no appeal—that if indiscreetly or unnecessarily removed, he must submit; for there is no tribunal authorized to cure the error, or rectify the wrong.*' Will you deny it?"*

I now call upon you, sir, to look this monstrous system of clerical usurpation and despotism full in the face, and tell

* Calvinistic Magazine.

the people of Tennessee, of the whole South, if you consider such a system worthy of all praise by Christian freemen? Unseal your lips, and, with your eye upon that dread, that awful bar, before which you must soon stand, say, if you dare say, that it is not both anti-scriptural and anti-republican? Tell them, if you dare, with your eye on the last Testament of Christ, that our blessed Saviour ever taught, or enjoined upon his ministers to teach, such a *God dishonoring* and *man-debasing* system as Methodism! Read his last words, teaching them to "observe all things, whatsoever *I* have commanded." Did Christ originally command the Great Iron Wheel of Methodism to be rolled by an army of four thousand priestly rulers, over the rights and consciences of his followers? Did he redeem them by his blood, and make them kings and priests unto God, to be slaves to *such* a horde of petty lordlings, to be *enslaved* and *oppressed* by such a *consolidated spiritual tyranny* as this *Iron Wheel?* God forbid!

Do you deny that Methodism is a despotism? Then can you affirm that the Russian, Turkish and Chinese despotisms are *pure republics*, and the subjects of the same are in the perfect enjoyment of the unspeakable blessings of civil and religious liberty? Will Bishop Soule tell us if the people in the Methodist Society, according to the system, (we thank God the system does not work perfectly, because it is in free America)—"will he tell us, if the people, as recognized by the system—the people—the members, whirled by the Great Iron Wheel, are not the merest *puppets*—moving round '*every day*' under the '*whirl*' of the class-leaders—who are *whirled* around by the travelling preachers—who are *whirled* around by the presiding elders—who are *whirled* around by the bishops—who are *whirled* around by the General Conference? Will you tell us, if the wheel turned

t proper speed, and all the parts were working right, whether these eight hundred thousand members might not be made to *whirl* around exactly alike—even dressed to order in stiff collars on one side, and dove-colored bonnets without ribbons on the other—doing identically the same thing, and at the same time, in every place, where the wheel moved, from the St. Johns to the Rio Grande?"

"There is a cotton factory, in which a thousand spindles whirl round under the impulse of so many bands, which bands are whirled by so many drums, which drums are whirled by a long shaft-line of communication, which shaft is whirled by a great water-wheel, and every spindle spins just so much cotton, a day, an hour, a minute. So with this Great Iron Wheel. Could it be made to work as perfectly as is desired by those who turn it, every Church member would whirl around—a machine, living, it is true, but as really a machine, as each spindle in the factory. The perfection of a soldier, said Bonaparte, is that he be an intelligent machine, having neither thought nor will of his own. This is the result aimed at, and in a lamentable degree accomplished by the Roman Catholic system—and this must be the result of the perfect motion of the *Great Iron Wheel.* Here a very important question comes up: *From whence does the Great Iron Wheel derive its power?* Listen!

"This General Conference," says Mr. Hamline, "is the sun in our orderly and beautiful system. Look into the Discipline. First, you have our Articles of Religion, in which God appears. What is next in order? *The General Conference*, which, like the orb of day, rises to shed light on the surrounding scene. It is first shaped, or fashioned, and then, like Adam, by his Maker, *is endowed with dominion, and made imperial in its relations;* and, saving the slight reservation of the constitution, it is *all-controlling* in its influences!" There it is. There you have the answer to

the question, from whence does the Great Iron Wheel derive its power? You see that the *power* thus professed by the General Conference, is claimed to be derived DIRECTLY FROM GOD! Yes. There you have it. "It," the General Conference, "is first shaped and fashioned, and then, like Adam by his Maker, *is endowed with dominion and made* IMPERIAL!" Yes, God has endowed the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church with *dominion*, and made it IMPERIAL. Not Regal. No. Regal dominion was not despotic enough. But God has endowed the Conference with *dominion*, and made it IMPERIAL. The *Cæsar*, the *Czar*, the *Emperor* is the highest style of power, unlimited, and unchecked. God has made the General Conference IMPERIAL. So said Mr. Hamline, and so said the General Conference itself.

"Now, we ask, where is the *power* of the PEOPLE in this system? Answer. No where. No where. They are the spindles, whirling, yonder, under the augmented, transmitted *power* through drums, and bands, and wheels. Where are the PEOPLE? There they are, whirling around every day, *attached* to the class leaders, who are *attached* to the itinerants, who are *attached* to the Presiding Elders, who are *attached* to the Bishops, under the *imperial control* of the outer, GREAT IRON WHEEL OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE."

"The thing is a naked despotism—imperial power in an ecclesiastical aristocracy, unblushingly avowed and glorified in. We have said, that in essence, this system is the same as that of the Jesuits of Rome. The Edinburgh Encyclopædia says: "Loyola, (the founder of the Jesuits,) resolved that the government of the Jesuits should be absolutely monarchical. A General, chosen for life by deputies from the several provinces, possessed supreme and independent power, extending to every person, and applying to every case. Every member of the order, the instant that he entered its

pale, surrendered all freedom of thought and action; and every personal feeling was superseded by the interests of that body to which he had attached himself. He went wher ever he was ordered; he performed whatever he was commanded; he suffered whatever he was enjoined; he became a mere passive instrument, incapable of resistance. The gradation of rank was only a gradation in slavery; and as perfect a despotism over a large body of men, dispersed over the face of the earth, was never before realized."

I request that this system of the Jesuits may be compared with the Great Iron Wheel, and with the imperial power, claimed for the General Conference, and derived, by Mr. Hamline and the Conference, *right from God*, by four thousand travelling preachers, and thirty thousand class-leaders; and strange to say, a half million of members, are made to believe that they enjoy *religious liberty*, when deprived of every governmental right and liberty for which blood was shed on the battle fields of the Revolution, or the hill of Calvary! Do the people enjoy liberty? Look at the people under the revolutions of this Wheel-within-a-wheel power!* Does not every reader see that it is REPUBLICANISM BACKWARDS? Is not such a government as anti-American as it is despotic? Are not the people governed without the faintest voice in the election of *their* rulers or direction of their government? Is not during power concentrated in the great ponderous outer wheel, the Episcopacy, or General Conference? Are not the people—the members—arrogantly denied the right to participate in the legislative councils of their Church? Is not this anti-American? Read the Declaration of Rights adopted by the Continental Congress, Oct. 14, 1774:

* Our artist has illustrated their liberty with great clearness.

"Resolved, 4,—That the foundation of English liberty and of *all free government*, is a right in the people to participate in their legislative council."

Is Methodism, then, a *free government?* Ought not American citizens to be as free in Church as in State? Do they despise the legacy of our hero ancestors? Where, oh where is the spirit that bled at Lexington, at Bunker's Hill, and at Yorktown. Is it enthroned and consecrate in the bosoms of American Methodists who can thus surrender the most inestimable rights of men?

LETTER XVI.

Methodism the Popery of Protestantism—as absolute and all-controlling as Jesuitism—Papal Bishops.

Dear Sir:—In my last, I asserted that the Methodism of the Discipline was a naked clerical despotism, and, in *essence*, *Popery* itself, and the worst form of Popery, *Jesuitism*.

Let us impartially compare them. The Edinburgh Encyclopædia says: "Loyola (the founder of the Jesuits) resolved that the government of the Jesuits should be absolutely monarchical. A General, chosen for life by deputies from the several provinces, possessed supreme and independent power, extending to every person, and applying to every case. Every member of the order, the instant that he entered its pale, surrendered all freedom of thought and action; and every personal feeling was superseded by the interests of that body to which he had attached himself. He went wherever he was ordered; he performed whatever he was commanded; he suffered whatever he was enjoined; he became a mere passive instrument incapable of resistance. The gradation of rank was only a gradation in slavery; and as perfect a despotism over a large body of men, dispersed over the face of the earth, was never before realized."

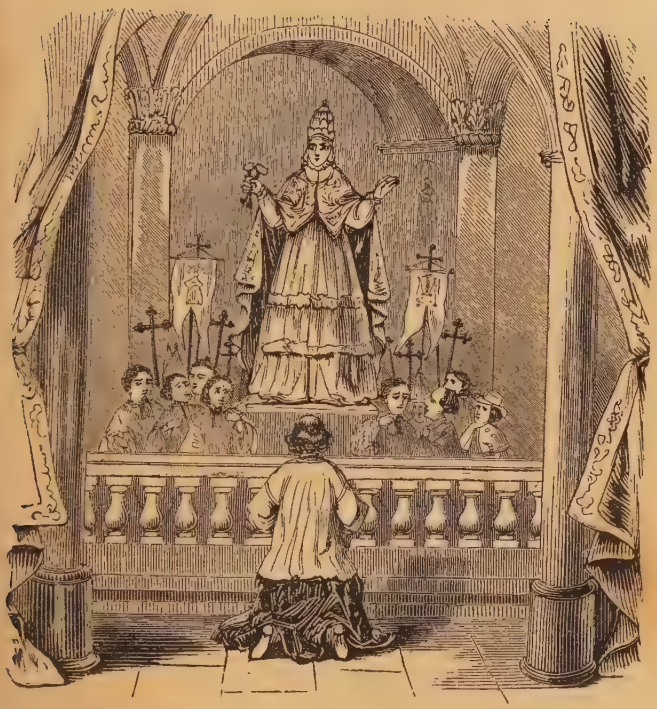
Now, will you turn back to the Wheel-illustration by your own Cookman? The great outer wheel—the bishops

answer to the General of the Society of Jesuits. Methodism has *many* Generals instead of *one;* so that it is Jesuitism in this respect, only "*a great deal more so!*" The power of the bishops, like that of the General of the Jesuits, extends *over* and *through the whole* Society—over all its agents and officers.

The second feature is also alike. Every minister or member, the instant he enters Methodism, surrenders *all religious freedom!* Think of this, Americans—think of it! He is no longer his own, but the *servant*, if a member, of all the clergy, and the leaders or petty overseers they appoint over him besides. The most ignoble sort of thraldom! If a minister, while he rules those *under* him, he himself is a slave of *his chief ministers* — those above him in rank! Therefore the third feature holds good—"*gradation in rank is only gradation in slavery!*"

The fourth general feature of Jesuitism is also perfect in Methodism. The minister who joins the Society of Mr. Wesley is compelled to go wherever he is ordered, without asking any *cause* or *questions;* return when commanded; to perform whatever is enjoined by his chief ministers; is a mere passive *tool* in the hands of his masters, to do their gracious wills and biddings! You may say that Methodist ministers elect their bishops—so do the Jesuits elect their General! And many a slave chooses his master; nothing is more common. But is he any the less a slave?

American Christians have heard much of the *awful* oath taken by Catholic priests and bishops to the Pope; many never saw it. I lay it before you, and place by its side the *oath you enjoin* upon all your ministers to obey you, together with your fellow-bishops, the *Popes* of Methodism; and I humbly ask you to point out to me any important difference:



LOOK AT THIS!

A Romish priest swearing to obey his master, the Pope, and whomsoever he may see fit to place over him.

THE OATH OF A ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST.

"I, N., elect of the church of N., from henceforward will be faithful and obedient to St. Peter the Apostle, and to the holy Roman Church, and to our Lord, the Lord N., and to his successors canonically coming in. I will neither advise, consent, nor do any thing that they may lose life or member, or that their persons may be seized, or hands anywise laid upon them, or any injuries offered to them, under any pretence whatsoever. The counsel which they shall entrust me withal, by themselves, their messengers, or letters, I will not, knowingly, reveal to any, to their prejudice. I will help them to defend and keep the Roman Papacy, and the royalties of St. Peter, saving my order against all men. The Legate of the Apostolic See going and coming, I will honorably treat and help in his necessities. The rights, honors, privileges, and authority of the holy Roman Church, of OUR LORD THE POPE, and his aforesaid successors, I will endeavor to preserve, defend, increase, and advance. I will not be in any council, action, or treaty, in which shall be plotted against our said Lord and the said Roman Church, anything to the hurt or prejudice of their persons, right, honor, state, or power, and if I shall know any such thing to be treated or agitated by any whatsoever, I will hinder it to the extent of my power; and as soon as I can, will signify it to our said Lord, or to some other, by whom it may come to his knowledge. The rules of the holy fathers, the apostolic decrees, ordinances, or disposals, reservations, provisions, and mandates, I will observe with all my might, and cause to be observed by others. Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to our said Lord, or his aforesaid successors, I will to the extent of my power persecute and oppose."

Now consider the oaths of Deacons and Elders to their Lords, the bishops. Imagine professed Protestant Christians and *ministers* of Christ Jesus, *if you can do it*, upon *bended knees* bowing before the Bishop, and solemnly vowing in God's awful name to discharge the items of the following oaths:

METHODIST DEACON'S VOW.

"*The Bishop.*—Will you REVERENTLY OBEY *them*, to whom the charge and government over you is committed following with a glad mind and will their godly (*ghostly!*) admonitions?

A.—I will endeavor to DO SO, "THE LORD BEING MY HELPER!!"

Q.—To whom is committed the *charge* and *government* over Deacons by the Discipline?

A.—To *Presiding Elders* and *Bishops.*

Is not here a *solemn vow* taken to obey—and that most *reverently*—these their spiritual *lords* and *masters?*

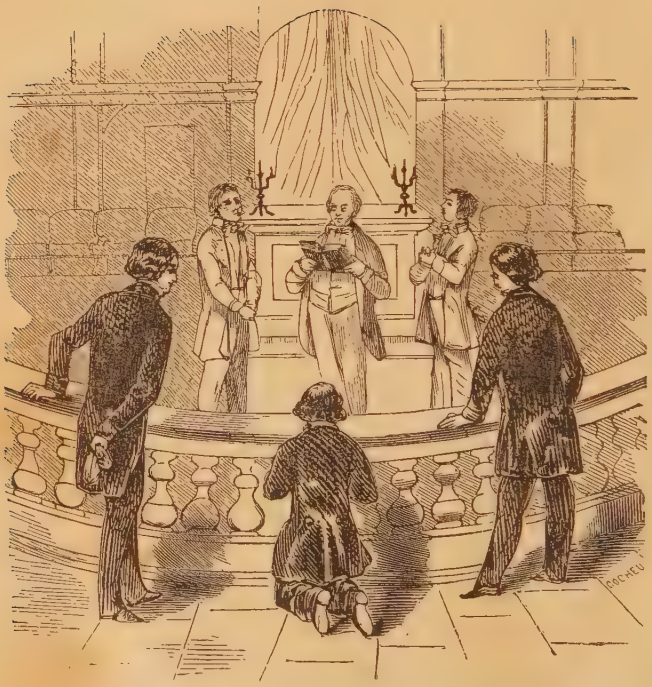
Is there not a solemn appeal made to God for the truth of their willingness to obey? It is, then, an oath.

Now turn to Discipline, pp. 207--210. In the ordination of *Elders*, the following most solemn and *awful* oath is administered:

A METHODIST ELDER'S OATH.

The bishop reads—"And now that this present congregation of Christ here assembled may also understand your minds and wills in these things, and that *this your promise* may the more move you to do your duties, ye shall answer plainly to these things which we, IN THE NAME OF GOD and his Church, shall demand of you touching the same."

Is not this an *oath!* is it not a solemn appeal to God?—



How like the last scene! What is the difference in principle?

is not this affirmation put in the name of God? It is, then, an oath.

What is it these servants answer to one question in the category?

The Bishop.—"Will you REVERENTLY OBEY your *chief ministers*, unto whom is committed the *charge* and *government* over you; following with a glad mind and will *their* godly admonitions, submitting yourself to their GODLY JUDGMENTS?"

Ans. "I will do so, *the Lord being my helper!!*"

Read it again—is it not a mistake? Can such a solemn, awful oath fall from a professing Christian's, much less Christian minister's lips! Read it:

THE BISHOP SAYS: "Will you REVERENTLY OBEY *your chief ministers*, unto *whom* is committed the CHARGE AND GOVERNMENT OVER YOU; FOLLOWING WITH A GLAD MIND AND WILL THEIR GODLY ADMONITIONS, SUBMITTING YOURSELVES TO THEIR GODLY JUDGMENTS?"

ANSWER OF THE ELDER: "I will *so do*, the Lord [forgive the poor deluded soul,] being my helper."

Blessed Saviour, and can this be the language of one of *thy* ministers—of a Protestant Christian freeman, in the nineteenth century? And didst thou not most solemnly command thy disciples to acknowledge no master—no lawgiver but thyself; and to teach only what thou hast enjoined upon them? And do they not here, as do the ministers of Antichrist, solemnly vow to take self-appointed lordlings for their masters, in all things regardless of what thou hast commanded—and that so fully, so absolutely, as to exercise no judgment or will of their own in reserving any liberty to consult *thy will?* Father, forgive them, they surely know not of what they do! Their leaders do cause them to err.

Is not this, Bishop Soule, a *more stringent oath* than the Catholic priests take to obey and do the bidding of their Pope? Does it not positively deprive one of the exercise of any mind, or will, or judgment, of his own? Does it not reduce the Methodist circuit-rider and elder to a mere *passive tool*, blindly *subservient to the will and wishes* of their ghostly superiors? Am I mistaken? Read under the duties of preachers page 77: "Act in *all* things, not according to your *own will*, but as a son (a slave would be a better word) in the gospel. As such it is your duty to employ your time in the manner which *we direct*, in preaching and visiting from house to house, in reading, meditation, and prayer; ABOVE ALL [all what? above any one, or all the above—reading the Bible or prayer to God?] *above all*, if you labor with us in the Lord's vineyard, it is needful YOU SHOULD DO that part of the work which WE ADVISE, at those times and places which WE *judge most for his glory*."—Discipline, p. 77.

I unhesitatingly pronounce the above oath and requisitions upon the inferior ministers of Methodism, equally, and more, if possible, degrading than the oath of submission required of Catholic priests—equal, fully, to the darkest *Jesuitism*. Methodist bishops require of their inferiors the *reverence* and *submission* due to God alone—*reverential, absolute and perfect obedience!!* It is of ANTICHRIST, since the chief ministers put themselves in the place of Christ—and require the inferior orders to obey them implicitly in all things, having no *thought, will*, or *judgment of their own*, or the least *concern for the commands of Jesus Christ, or the glory of God!*

It is a most clear rejection of the authority and directing guidance of God, on the part of Methodist ministers. The direction God gave to his servant Jeremiah is still in force. "Say not I am a child: (to be ordered about by others—a *son* to any one in the gospel) for thou shalt go to all that

I send thee, and whatsoever *I* command thee thou shalt speak." But those Methodist bishops presumptuously and impiously thrust themselves before God and his servants, and assuming the prerogative of the Almighty, virtually say, "Not so, but you must be a son to us, and go to all, and wherever, we shall send thee, and have no concern, no *mind* or *will*, for what God commands, or do what is for his glory, but whatsoever we command, direct, you must speak and do!!

Then it is also a positive and aggravated rejection of Jesus Christ as their master—and of his supreme authority over them, both by Methodist bishops and their ministers. Christ positively commands, "Call no man your father upon earth (if Methodist ministers acknowledge themselves *sons* in the gospel to the bishops, and do they not acknowledge the bishops to be their *fathers?*) for one is your father who is in heaven."

"Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master; even Christ, and all ye are *brethren*," i. e. only equals in rank and authority.

Can a methodist minister say that Christ is his only master? He would assert falsely. Let him look at his oath. He has solemnly abjured Christ, and taken men for his master—his presiding elders and bishops!

Are not Methodist ministers, then, in the most odious sense, *men-servers?* They are to do the will of *their* masters, the bishops, in *every respect whatever*, *whenever*, and *wherever* it may be! A consolidated clerical despotism—a hierarchy of the most effective and powerful kind! It is anti-Christ—I unhesitatingly pronounce it ANTICHRIST!! The Catholic priest must *reverence* as well as *obey* his superiors—so must a Methodist! But the Catholic is required to reject the Bible as the only rule of his faith and practice, and

to swear his adhesion to the traditions, ordinances, discipline, and rules of his father, the Pope, and his councils. This we also consider *impious.* But Methodist ministers are solemnly bound to do the same thing—reject the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice, and put the Discipline—the statute book—the laws and traditions of the bishops, and the Conference, in its place!

He is sworn, for he takes a solemn oath, to place the Discipline above the Bible, as the Catholic does the decisions of the Pope and his councils! See his Discipline, page 50, "And remember, a Methodist preacher is to mind every *point, great and small,* in the Methodist Discipline—therefore, you will need all the sense and grace you have."

The Discipline is made, *and he vows to make it,* his Bible!—it is above the word of God to him; *he is to obey the Discipline, in preference to the Bible!* It is not for him to care what Christ commands; for, above reading and prayer, he is to "do what his chief ministers command him"—it is not for him to seek to please God, but his *bishop* and clerical masters; nor is he to be concerned for the glory of God, but of Methodism! He may safely preach that there are many *non-essentials* in the *New Testament,* but he must hold and teach that there are none in the *Discipline*—for he is pledged to observe EVERY POINT, *great and small, in it!!*

To my feelings, the above seems little short of blasphemy. I am shocked and shudder at the reflection. I have read and reread these pages, and my whole frame trembles and my nerves quiver at every perusal. I cannot help it. I am either beside myself, or it is something *supremely awful* that I contemplate. To my mind it seems that the Methodist preacher who takes the above vow, takes man for his God—takes a solemn oath of allegiance to serve and obey

a presumptuous mortal, who has the arrogance to demand it at his hands! It is to my mind downright IDOLATRY, and that of the *grossest kind!* To obey and to serve a mortal, *religiously*, is to render to men what we owe to *God alone.* To serve or obey, is to *worship.* This is the definition given by Christ: "Thou shalt *worship* the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou *serve.*" To *obey* is to *serve*, to *serve* is to *worship*—to *worship* or *obey* a mortal, or any body in religion but God, is *idolatry.*

Hence, to obey the commands, behests, and arbitrary dictation of spiritual masters and rulers—called "chief ministers"—is to serve them, is to worship them—yielding them that homage, reverence, and obedience due to Christ alone.

No; I might be crushed to earth—racked upon the wheel, until every limb was dissevered, burnt to ashes, or torn, *piecemeal*, but never, no, never, unless God should forsake me, would I, on bended knee, in the name of God, swear such allegiance to mortal—to any created being—no, not to the arch-angel Gabriel himself!

What true American freeman, through whose heart dashes the pure, untainted blood of Freedom's sires, would bend and swear blind and implicit servitude to a tyrant over both his conscience and his judgment! What Christian minister, who feels the warm glowings of the sacred fire of Christian freedom in his heart—upon whose eye has gleamed the light—whose bosom has felt the throbbings of that "glorious liberty," wherewith Christ makes free—who has felt the emancipating, disenthralling genius and power of the gospel of man's salvation, would tamely succumb to such a *disgraceful* and *degrading* yoke of bondage, as to call *men* their masters, and become the servants of men; "Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the *servants of men*," says Paul. Ex-

cuse me; I cannot even copy these Antichristian and *abhorrent* oaths, without my blood taking fire in "holy indignation."

The Pope himself makes no greater demand than this—nothing that more clearly stamps and characterizes him as "Antichrist," or the "Man of Sin," and Son of Perdition.

But these preachers solemnly swear to obey the "*godly judgment*" [is there no infallibility implied here?] of their chief ministers! What are some of the requisitions?

6. To take care that every part of our Discipline be enforced in his district. Page 65.

7. *To attend the bishops when present in his district.* Page 66. Pretty *lackeying* this!! The *ministers of Christ*, the *lackeys* of spiritual potentates! See the oath of the Catholic Priest. He is sworn to *attend and wait upon the Pope when his Holiness passes through his district!!*

3. He shall read the rules of the Society with the aid of the other preachers, once a year in every congregation, and once a quarter in every Society. P. — [Left out in 1850.]

In receiving a preacher into full connection, the following questions are asked:

"Do you know the rules of Society—of the bands? Do *you* keep them? Have you read the form of Discipline? *Are you willing to conform to it?* Have you considered the rules of a preacher, especially the 1st, 10th and 12th? Will you keep them for *conscience* sake?"

If he answers these, and many more, in the affirmative, the Conference admits him, and gives him a *Discipline*, (not a *New Testament*,) and this commission: "As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavor to walk by *these* rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-laborer."

Not so long as he observes implicitly the New Testament, but the Bishop's Testament, is he acknowledged; not so long

as he faithfully serves Christ, but the "Hierarchy," and obeys his superiors.

But what are these three rules so especially enjoined above all others? To preach, to study God's Word, and follow none but Christ? No, but to preach, study and follow the Discipline, and *above all*, obey *us*, your chief ministers!!

"1st Rule. To preach. [Left out in new edit.]

"10th. Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time. And do not *mend our* rules but keep them." Mark it, keep '*our rules!!*'

"11th. (Last clause of the rule.) And remember! a Methodist preacher is to mind every point. GREAT and *small*, in the Methodist Discipline! Therefore you will need to exercise all the sense (?!) and grace you have;" and *as little of the liberty of conscience, freedom of thought, fear of God as possible*, should have been added, for these men servers!

Mark well, there is nothing non-essential in the Discipline --in the Bishop's Testament—not even a *point*, however *small*, all must be kept, but these ministers may teach that there are *many positive commands* in Christ's last will and testament which are *non-essential* and trivial, and can be omitted or "*amended* with impunity!!!"

"12th Rule. Act in all things, not according to *your own* will, but as a *son* [i. e. our servant] in the gospel!! As such it is your *duty* to employ your time in the manner which WE direct in preaching and visiting from house to house, in reading, meditation and prayer. ABOVE ALL, [hear it, oh, ye heavens! and be astonished; oh, ye earth—hear it! above preaching the gospel, reading God's word, obeying Christ or even prayer? yes, above *all*,] if you labor with us in the Lord's [Mr. Wesley's] vineyard, it is needful that you

should do that part of the work which WE advise, at those *times* and places which WE judge most for his glory." *Slavery—spiritual serfdom*—what shall I say—I have no language in which to express my feelings. My words are nothing! Were an angel from heaven to presume to impose such a law upon a mortal, he would be thrust down to hell in a moment—and for a mortal—a poor fallen mortal to demand service of his fellow!!—what shall I say?

If this is not a bold example and illustration of Antichrist, and the pretensions and blasphemous assumptions of the "Man of Sin," opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God, the world has never yet beheld one!

Is not this an *Antichristian* power, that makes implicit and *servile* obedience to its mandates, the first and most important duty—the one above even the worship of God (prayer) and the reading or teaching his Word!—to heed and obey the will of man more than the will of God! This is setting man above God!

Be assured, sir, it affords me no pleasure to write these things—to portray these awful, and to my mind, abominable features of your system. I am painfully shocked as each unscriptural feature develops itself before me—as the system passes in review before my mind.

My heart sickens at these sentiments—at the picture of spiritual bondage and degradation, enjoined and achieved by these chief ministers—these Methodist "principalities and powers," and all these unhallowed and impious pretensions claimed by the *especial grace* of God to their word! I am sad and pained to think that professed Protestant ministers should, in the name of religion, assert such fearful Antichristian authority and jurisdiction over their brethren. I

am grieved to think that American Christians can be found blindly and servilely to bow down to such a degrading spiritual and temporal vassalage. I close each paragraph, as I do each letter, humbled with a sense of the weakness of human nature, with a fervent prayer that His light and truth may go forth until this darkness shall be illumined, and this blindness be dispelled—and priestcraft and spiritual wickedness, that has enthroned itself in high places, and become proud and insolent with authority, may be overthrown, and all the friends of Christ be made to rejoice in the glorious liberty where with Christ makes us free.

LETTER XVII.

A Methodist Bishop the Pope of Protestantism—His overwhelming Despotic Powers.

"How dare you suffer yourself to be called a Bishop."—*Wesley.*

SIR:—Not until I had carefully examined the powers claimed and exercised by a Methodist Bishop did I understand the force of Wesley's question to the first Methodist who presumed to assume Episcopal authority: "How DARE you suffer yourself to be called a bishop?" This language implies that there is an awful DARING—a fearful presumption, in presuming to claim and exercise Episcopal functions. We may inquire, "In what does this *daring* consist?" Evidently in assuming the power of Antichrist over men—in men thrusting themselves in between God and man, between Christ and those who seek to be his followers, and claiming from them that *reverence* and *obedience* due to Christ alone. God created every man a sovereign—the equal and the equal *only* of his fellow. No one was created with a divine right to command him. Not even an angel had a right to dictate a command to him. No arch-angel would have dared, or would now dare to lay his behests upon man and exact obedience in the least particular. No one has a right to command man but God alone. Slavery, then,

is not an original condition. Had there been no sin, there would have been no slavery. God himself *instituted* it as a *punishment* upon the descendants of Ham. (And I grant he had a perfect right to do so. I have no war with God, I am to see that I only do not bring down his curse upon my own head by abusing those enslaved.) He has also *suffered* it, more effectually to work out the gracious designs of his providence, as the slavery of Israel in Egypt, for 215 years.

When God removes the curse from Ham, which will not be until every curse is abolished, the slavery of his race will cease, and not until then.

But in the kingdom of grace there is no slavery allowed. No race, no class of men have a curse of servitude passed upon them. All are made free and equal in Christ Jesus; all sovereigns and no masters. Jesus Christ has constituted himself "*Head over all things* to his church," and consequently it is treason for any other *head* to claim to be over *anything* to the Church. Christ Jesus has taken the throne as the only King in Zion, consequently all the laws and rules, &c., of his kingdom must emanate from himself. If any other person or persons, or body of men, constitute themselves the Head of his Church, or claim to themselves the right to exercise the prerogative of the King alone—*i. e.* to legislate, enact and change laws, rules, rites and ordinances for Christ's Church, and prescribe duties to Christ's subjects, they evidently set themselves up in opposition to Christ; they are Antichrists to all intents and purposes, for they claim to exercise the prerogatives of Christ.

The King and Lawgiver in Zion is jealous of his honor, and knowing the ambitious disposition of man, he was explicit in his commands upon this subject—in forbidding his ministers to usurp his prerogatives in exercising *authority* over his followers, and his people to suffer or to submit to

it. Hear him: "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them, and their *great ones* exercise *authority* upon them. *But so shall it not be among you*, but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister, and whosoever will be the chiefest, shall be *servant* (not the master or ruler) of all." In the Church of Christ there were to be no *lords*, or those who should exercise *lordly authority* upon their brethren—no *great ones* in authority and power. He expressly says there must not be. The humblest, the most laborious, was to be the greatest among them; not great in *power*, but in *love* and *honor*. Hear him again. The Jewish Rabbis were teachers of the law and had, in the days of Christ, thrust themselves into Moses' seat—assumed the prerogative of Moses to make laws, and to lay their authoritative commands upon their brethren; they were authoritative rulers of the people. "Be not *ye* called Rabbi: for one is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father, (of the same import with Rabbi and Master,) upon earth, for one is your father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called master, for one is your Master even Christ.* For he that is greatest among *you* shall be *your servant*." No language could be more definite than this. Authoritative power was not to be assumed. Even the title of Rabbi or Master, much less the power or authority, is positively forbidden to be used or exercised. He alone is master, ruler, and lawgiver over his children. Does not this Scripture

* This, in my humble opinion, forbids the conferring and receiving of flattering titles from one another, as "Doctor of Divinity." It is understood to be the acknowledgment of *superiority*, and the world looks, and the poor flattered D.D. is apt to look upon himself as something above the generality of his brethren. It is pernicious in its tendency.

rebuke the impious arrogance of Popes, who style themselves "Holy Fathers" and "Lord God the Pope?" claiming both the title and the exercise of the power? Now, Bishop Soule, look candidly into the face of these Scriptures, and tell me—rather tell the world—how you DARE to be a bishop! You exercise *lordship* over your brethren. You have most anxiously sought and gained the position of a "*great one*" in what you regard the Church of Christ, and you exercise authority upon your brethren. You imperiously dictate your commands to your brother ministers, whom you make your servants, and you have required of them to take a solemn oath and obey you *reverently* in all things, *and above all things*, thus absolving them from their obligations to obey God rather than man, and to consult *his will* and *his glory* in all things; you require them solemnly, in the presence of God, of angels and men, to vow to obey "you as their *chief minister*, to whom *is committed* the care and government *over them*," to obey you, to have no mind, will, or judgment of their own—but to submit to your godly judgment. These ministers you send here and there as you will. Saying to one *go*, and he goeth, and to another *come*, and he cometh. Did Jesus Christ reduce his ministers to such a degrading vassalage as this! Did he surrender them into the hands and power of man—or a set of men? Did he appoint a despot a sovereign lord over them, to govern them, according to his lusts? Did he intend for a lordly aristocrat to "lord it" over "his heritage"—his ministers and his people? Did he even commit the direction of his ministers and the government of his church into the hands of an angel—of the highest arch-angel in the Universe?! No, *never*. For that angel to presume to exercise the above powers, that *you* claim to exercise, even one item of them, to command a minister of Jesus Christ to obey him—to *go*

and *come* as he commanded—would constitute that angel an *arch*-Antichrist. Bishop Soule, you are now an old man, with dimmed eyes, grey hairs, and trembling limbs. I beg of you before your last few sands have run, think of this question of your own great Wesley, "How DARE you to be a bishop?" How DARE you presume to exercise a prerogative that would cost the loftiest arch-angel around the throne his harp and diadem. Tell me, or rather tell your brethren, and the world, who committed unto you the care and absolute government and control of thousands of Christ's ministers, if you claim your preachers as Christian ministers? Did God? Did the Saviour? If so, where? Does he not forbid it with the ample sanction of his authority? Sir, I look upon your assumptions and the position you occupy with respect to Methodism, as I do upon the assumptions of the Pope of Rome, and the position he occupies with respect to the Church of Rome. What a daring to thrust yourself between Christ and his ministers and children—where no angel would dare to tread—and exercise your supreme lordship over them.

I have said the authority of the bishop is supreme, and his power despotic. Every part of Methodism is contrived to give the bench of bishops an all-controlling, overwhelming power over the whole system, to give it any direction they please, as much as the despotic Emperor of Russia has over the Greek Church, or over his own army. Cookman rightly calls the episcopacy the "*great outer wheel*" that *puts* and *keeps in motion* the whole machinery.

Methodist bishops are elected, not by the people, but by the General Conference, composed of travelling preachers, as the pope is elected by the College of Cardinals.

WHAT ARE THE POWERS OF THE BISHOPS? We quote from the Discipline.

"What are the duties of bishops?"

A. "To preside in the General and Annual Conferences." P. 59.

1. "Who shall preside in the Annual Conferences?" A. "The bishops; but in the absence of all the bishops, a presiding elder; but in case there are two or more presiding elders belonging to one Conference, the bishop may by letter or otherwise, appoint the president." Page 48. [Altered.]

Now, of as little importance as this may appear to the unthinking, yet does it not show how carefully the bishops have provided for the supremacy of their authority in, and over the Annual Conferences? No Annual Conference has the right or power to select its own president! If one of the bishops is not present, the next in command is to officiate, and the bishop by letter indicates the favorite elder, if there are two or more belonging to the body. Who is not apprised of the power of the president in and over that body, especially when he has his authority to decide all questions of law and appoint every member of the Conference to whatever field of labor he pleases, and make whom he pleases presiding elder? His influence is all-prevailing, and all-controlling. Every minister crouches submissively at his feet, as a slave at the feet of his master, because his weal or woe, his elevation or debasement is in the sovereign will and word of his lord and master the bishop. Where can there be found an assembly alike subject to the one-man power, as an annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church?

2. To fix the appointments of the preachers in the Annual Conferences, provided he shall not allow any preacher to remain in the same circuit or station more than two years successively; except the presiding elders, the book agents and editors authorized by the General Conference, the corresponding secretary of the Missionary Society, the supernumerary

and superannuated preachers, missionaries among the Indians, missionaries to our people of color and on foreign stations, chaplains to state prisons and military posts, those preachers that may be appointed to labor for the special benefit of seamen, and for the American Bible Society, also the preacher or preachers that may be stationed in the city of New Orleans, and the presidents, principals, or teachers of seminaries of learning, which are or may be under our superintendence; and also, when requested by an Annual Conference, to appoint a preacher for a longer time than two years to any seminary of learning not under our care. He shall have authority, when requested by an Annual Conference, to appoint an agent, whose duty it shall be to travel throughout the bounds of such Conference for the purpose of establishing and aiding Sabbath Schools, and distributing tracts, and also to appoint an agent or agents for the benefit of our literary institutions.

3. To choose the presiding elders, fix their stations, and change them when he judges it necessary; provided he shall not allow any elder to preside in the same district more than four years successively.

4. To change, receive, and suspend preachers in the intervals of the Conferences, as necessity may require, and as the Discipline directs.

5. To appoint the times of holding the sessions of the Annual Conferences; provided every Conference shall have the right to sit a week at least, if it think proper.

6. To ordain Bishops, elders, and deacons; and to see that the names of the persons ordained by him be entered on the journals of the Conference.

7. To decide all questions of law coming before him in the regular business of an Annual Conference; provided such questions be presented in writing, and with his decisions be

recorded on the journal of the Conference. When the Bishop shall have decided a question of law, the Conference shall have the right to determine how far the law thus decided or interpreted is applicable to the case then pending. An Annual Conference shall have a right to appeal from such decision to the College of Bishops, whose decision in such cases shall be final. And no episcopal decision shall be authoritative except in the case pending, nor shall any such be published, until it shall have been approved by the College of Bishops. And each Bishop shall report in writing to the episcopal college, at an annual meeting to be held by them, such decisions as he has made, subsequently to the last preceding meeting; and all such decisions, when approved by the College of Bishops, shall be recorded in a permanent form, and published in such manner as the Bishops shall agree to adopt; and when so approved, recorded, and published, they shall be authoritative interpretations or constructions of the law.

8. To hear and decide appeals of the Quarterly Conferences on questions of law, when he shall be presiding in any Annual Conference; and the question contained in the appeal, together with the Bishop's decision, shall be recorded on the journal of the Annual Conference.

9. To see that the districts be formed according to his judgment; provided that no district shall contain more than fourteen appointments.

10. To unite two or more circuits, stations, or missions together, when he judges it necessary, provided the financial interests and pastoral duties of each may remain separate and independent.

Can a more perfect centralization of power in the hands of one man be conceived of—and that man responsible to

no one for the use of his authority! He elevates and degrades whom he pleases, and no one on earth has the right to say "why doest thou so?"

1. He decides all questions of law, puts his own construction upon the Discipline.

2. It is his prerogative to exercise unlimited control and supreme jurisdiction over the thousand travelling preachers, appointing them to whatever posts, offices, stations or circuits he pleases, in a word, command them to do *whatever* he pleases, and *when* he pleases, and *where* he pleases. The bishop has only his own sovereign pleasure to consult. The welfare of every minister hangs upon the point of the bishop's pen. He can give a minister a good appointment or an indifferent one, as he pleases. He allows no preacher to petition for a certain station. He is to have no mind or will of his own, but in all things submit himself blindly to the godly judgment of his chief ministers, who have the control of him. The bishop knows well how to teach his servants passive obedience to his episcopal rod. If he learns of one becoming dissatisfied with an indifferent appointment one year, he can punish him by giving him one ten fold worse the next. If he discovers one whom the yoke of clerical domination galls, who is becoming restive under the lash and is republican in his religious views, the bishop can resort to one of two effective remedies—either to humble him, crush his spirit out of him by keeping him in the mountains and swamps, until he gives in; or bribe his obedience with preferment. Give him a *presiding eldership*, or give him fat stations in towns and cities. See that some Methodist college confer a doctorate upon him, promise him the presidency of some college,—or a bishopric, may be the shining goal that is held out to him in the end. How many have been kept from the paths of reform, whose feet had well

nigh slipped from the support of the episcopacy? The world has abundant reason to believe that the temptation of preferment prevailed over the principles of a McKendree, of a Waugh, of an Emory, and alas, alas! over the lamented Bascom. Did not all these men sympathize deeply with the reformers—did they not, one and all bear their testimony against the dangerous power and despotism of the episcopacy, and were they not made D. D.'s and bishops subsequently?*

But the weal or wo of every *station*, or society, is made to hang upon the bishop's smile or frown. He claims the divine right to select the minister for each station, circuit or chapel throughout the wide domain of Methodism. He sends whom he pleases. He allows no society to indicate whom it would have, or to express the slightest wish about it. Each society must accept and support whomsoever its lord the bishop appoints! If any society has incurred the displeasure of his highness, by having been so indiscreet as to have asked for the reappointment of some favorite preacher, or may not have contributed money as liberally as he wished, or may chance entertain too liberal views, the bishop can scourge it into repentance, by sending to it a succession of unacceptable and inefficient preachers, or some tyrant to oppress, and if that society prove refractory still, he can turn the key and shut up the meeting house against them—a house they have built with their own money, and leave them without a preacher. They are thus virtually under ban of excommunication and dispossessed, and the only alternative left them is to repent and submit,

* Read again Bascom's mature and honest opinion of Methodism, in the quotations I have given, and above all read his inimitable Declaration of Rights, in the Little Iron Wheel. Price 40 cents.

or revolt, leaving their possessions in the bishop's hands! Is not this despotic power? Is it not the *power of the Pope*, to all intents and purposes?

But every preferment is in the gift of the bishop. It is his prerogative to appoint presiding elders—to make and unmake them at his pleasure, and the under ministers, the laborers, must receive and obey them, and the circuits must support them, however tyrannical, inefficient, or unacceptable they may be; and these under-lordlings can exercise the same authority as the bishops, upon the preachers.

"It shall be the duty of the bishops to choose the presiding elders, to fix their stations, and to change them when they judge it necessary." Page 33. Rev. J. S. Inskip, a Methodist author, says:

Page 146. "The presiding elders are chosen by the bishops; and, however unacceptable the persons thus chosen may be to those whose situation in life and ministerial labors they appoint and direct, they have no authority to displace them." Their official action may be altogether erroneous and unsatisfactory; they may be chargeable with the most *flagrant* and *oppressive* favoritism; and yet the parties oppressed have no power to remove them from office."

3. The bishops have every press in all Methodism under their control, as much as Pio Nono, or any absolute monarch in Europe. They appoint the editors, and change them at their pleasure. What are Methodist editors but the *servants* and *tools* of the bishops? Who can respect them as independent journalists? Who can tell when they write their own *conscientious* sentiments or according to the will of their masters? Where, under such Episcopal surveillance and jurisdiction, is the freedom of the press, in the dominion of Methodism? But we leave this now for future consideration.

4. The bishops appoint all the teachers of their schools.

All their schools, then, are under their patronage and control.

5. All the travelling agents are under their appointment and control.

6. All the missionaries in home or foreign stations.

7. They claim the right to control the *spiritual and temporal* business of the Church! The Pope of Rome claims no more power—he could not!

8. The bishop marks out the course of instruction, the reading and the study of all the ministers, and thus can mould them to his sovereign will and pleasure!

Thus can we see how your whole system is construed—to make all your ministers agents, editors, teachers, etc.; and every part of the system subservient to the *bishops*—and how it makes it for the interest of all the above to please and to be popular with the bishops! Whom will you appoint for presiding elders—and who for editors—who for presidents and teachers of your schools—to all the places of power and fat salaries? Whom, sir—*whom* but your special favorites—those most popular with you—those most pliant, subservient and willing to sell their consciences and religious principles, if any they have, to uphold Episcopacy, and the power, authority and administration of the bishop! All your preachers, *editors*, schools, agents, missionaries, etc., are your creatures, and, therefore, it is their interests, everywhere, to raise the shout, "God save the bishop!—long live the Episcopacy!!" No wonder there is such an outcry—no wonder the very heavens are rent from river to gulf by so many thousands of placemen and place-seeking men, when an article is published or a sermon preached, in which the all-controlling authority and vicegerency of Methodist bishops are questioned, denied or repudiated by a Baptist editor or faithful preacher. Where there is one such

sermon preached, or one such article written, there should be a thousand, and there shortly will be, thank God; the day is coming, and now is, when spiritual potentates, rulers and hierarchies will be called into judgment by an outraged and indignant people. They will demand of you, "Who made you judge and ruler over us? Who committed us to your care, and absolute, despotic and degrading government? and you will be bound to answer, or flee the rocking throne of your episcopal jurisdiction.

The time is coming, too, when an American citizen, a republican Christian, will feel himself insulted to be invited to enter one of your societies, and voluntarily concede his invaluable and indefeasible rights as a man and a freeman, freely put off Christ, his Testament and his laws, and allow you to weld your collar around his neck, and vow alliance to your Discipline, as above the word of God. And may God hasten the time when the yoke of your vassalage shall be broken, and your ghostly scepter turned to ashes, and your statute-book be trampled with indignation beneath every Christian foot, and Christ alone be King.

[N. B. The Conference of 1858 deprived the Bishops of some of their power, and placed the press in the hands of the *Conference.* See Appendix to this edition of this book.]

LETTER XVIII.

Methodist Presiding Elders—Sub-Bishops—their Irresponsible and Oppressive Powers.

They that are *accounted* to rule over the Gentiles exercise *lordship* over them.
CHRIST.

SIR:—Having shown in my last your daring assumption in presuming to exercise the powers and authority you do, as bishop over your brethren—(assumptions so impious and daring that your own Wesley said, in denouncing the first Methodist bishop, "How *can* you, how *dare* you suffer yourself to be called a bishop? I *shudder*, I START, at the very thought!!") I will now notice your Second or Aid—the officer next to you in authority, and the oppressive and tyrannical powers you delegate to him.

THE PRESIDING ELDER is a servant of the bishop—he peculiarly belongs to his bishop as no other minister does. He is chosen solely by the bishop—holds his office during the pleasure of his master—can be dismissed at his master's pleasure, for no reason except the royal pleasure of his lordship, and his business is, not *to preach*—to serve God—by no means—that is not reckoned among his duties, but to serve the bishop in the character of a sub-overseer, as a *spy* and *informant* upon his brethren, and he is, for this exalted service, allowed to share in the authority of his master during the recess of Conference, and to be Judge in the *Quarterly Courts of Appeals*. This officer, from the very nature of his

office and work, is the most irresponsible character, in our estimation, of any in the whole society. The presiding elder is, of course, selected as one of the most pliant tools that can be found among all the ministers—one that has the least principle and the least sense of honor or shame, or he would scorn to become the sweep, the very serf of the bishop, or of any *man*—scorn to become the spy and informant upon his brethren in the ministry—*scorn* to exercise the mastery over them, so hostile to the express letter and the very spirit of the Gospel. He is *accounted* to rule over the Gentiles of his district, and like the under rulers to whom our Lord referred in the text, he exercises an insolent and oppressive *lordship* over the preachers under him, as every circuit-rider can testify, if he happens not to be as pliant and couching as his mighty lordship, the elder, desires.

I am aware that it becomes me to prove this. I have said that the presiding elder is the sole creature and servant of man—the bishop, depending upon him alone for his appointment and continuance in office, and is responsible to the bishop alone for his official conduct.

Proof:—"It shall be the duty of the *bishop to choose* the presiding elders, to fix their stations, and to change them when *he* judges it necessary"—Discipline, p. 38. No one is permitted to nominate the candidate—nor when elected can all the preachers in the Conference control his acts, or suspend him from the exercise of his office for any crime! To his own master, the bishop, he standeth or falleth. He can be dismissed at the bishop's pleasure, for no crime, for no fault, and that without any reasons being given, nor has he the right to ask a reason. "Suspension, removal, or deposition from office in the Methodist E. Church is *summary*," [i. e. despotic!] without accusation, trial, or formal sentence. "It is for no crime, generally for no misdemeanor, but for being

unacceptable." "Most of the removals are by a sole agent, namely, by a bishop, a preacher whose will is omnipotent in the premises." "The removing officer is not legally obliged to assign any cause for deposition." "The deposed has no appeal, if *indiscreetly* or *unnecessarily* removed, *he must* SUBMIT."—Bishop Hamline's Speech in Conference of 1844.

I am compelled to ask you here, sir, did Jesus Christ ever clothe his ministers with such "summary" and tyrannical powers over their brethren? What right then have you, sir, to remove an elder from an office to which the Lord Jesus has called him? What is the question you ask him? "Do you think in your heart that you are truly *called*, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ to the order of elders?" He answers, "I think so." Your presiding elders, of course, feel that they have an *equal* calling; and, if so, how dare *you recall* and depose from office one whom the Lord hath called —and depose from an office which the Lord hath imposed upon him? How, sir, but by assuming to exercise the powers superior to the King of Zion? But I can see how you meet this. "The office of presiding elder is one of my own creation, and the presiding elder is a creation of my own will. Jesus Christ has nothing to do with him—he belongs to me —Christ nor the Holy Ghost has any thing to do with *calling* him. *I call* him"—The bishops *call* their presiding elders, and can consequently recall them. They are self-denying servants. They freely deny themselves the honor of saying with Peter, "Peter, servant and apostle of Jesus Christ—called of God;" or with Paul, "Paul an apostle (*not of men*), neither [called and sent] *by a man*, but by Jesus Christ," that they may say, "John B. M'Ferrin, servant and apostle of my bishop, called and sent to be a presiding elder (or an editor), not of God, neither by Jesus Christ, but the will of my Lord Bishop ——."!!

Do I say too much when I say that the presiding elder is not a preacher—is not sent to preach, and that the bishop does not mention preaching in his commission as one of his duties? Here is his commission—here the lordly powers and ruling privileges granted to him under the bishop, for the voluntary prostitution of himself, conscience, and service, soul and body to man-service. It makes it his business to *rule*, to be judge of all the "Quarterly Courts of Appeals" in his district; and to be spy and informer upon the preachers of his district! What an honorable calling, truly! He is the bishop's agent. Read his commission. See Dis. p. 39, sec. vi.:

"Of the Presiding Elders, and their Duty.

Q. "1. What are the duties of a presiding elder?

A. "1. To travel through his appointed district.

"2. In the absence of the bishop to take charge of all the elders and deacons, travelling and local preachers and exhorters, in his district.

"3. To change, receive, and suspend preachers in his district during the intervals of the Conferences, and in the absence of the bishop, as the Discipline directs. [What an irresponsible and high-handed power! No wonder the elder is such an important personage in the eyes of the itinerants!]

"4. To be present, as far as practicable, at all the quarterly meetings, and call together the members of the quarterly Conference, over which he shall also preside.

"5. To oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the Church in his district, and to promote, by all proper means, the cause of missions and Sunday-schools, and the publication at our own press, of Bibles, tracts, and Sunday-school books; and carefully to inquire at each quarterly meeting Conference, whether the rules respecting the instruction of children have been faithfully observed, and to report to the

annual Conference the names of all travelling preachers within his district, who shall neglect to observe these rules.

"6. To take care that every part of our Discipline be enforced in his district. And to decide all questions of law in a quarterly meeting Conference, subject to an appeal to the president of the next annual Conference; but in all cases the application of law shall be with the Conference.

"7. To attend the bishops when present in his district; and to give them when absent, all necessary information, by letter, of the state of his district.

"8. To direct the candidates for the ministry to those studies recommended for them by the bishops.

"9. If any preacher absent himself from his circuit, the presiding elder shall, as far as possible, fill his place with another preacher.

"Q. 2. Shall the presiding elder have power to employ a preacher who has been rejected at the previous annual Conference?

"A. He shall not, unless the Conference should give him liberty under certain conditions."

I have been careful to give the *whole section*, and there is not one word about preaching—that is a secondary matter. If you make it the duty of your presiding elders to preach in the Discipline, I have not been able to find it, and would be obliged to you for a reference to the page. He has but two classes of duties. To *obey his bishop* is the first, and to *rule* and *watch* his brethren—his equals and superiors, in true merit and self-denying labors, the second!

Some may think that I seek to turn the Quarterly Conferences into derision, by calling them "quarterly Courts of Appeal," and the presiding elder "Judge of Appeals," for our brethren who are uninitiated are very exact to dismiss their religious meetings when these Methodist Courts hold

their sessions in their neighborhood!! I would not be so understood. I have called them by their true name, and in this I am not alone. Inskip says of the presiding elder, "He has charge of the administration of the discipline throughout the district. He is to take care that every part of our discipline be enforced. He is to preside at the trials of local preachers, and in THE COURT OF APPEALS." P. 140. Again, "He comes as adviser, or JUDGE OF APPEALS." P. 142. If my language is irreverent, so is that of one of your own standard authors.

I have said that he was not only a judge over, but a spy and informant upon his brethren—a double office that honorable and high-minded men would scorn to fulfil. For proof, I refer to the 7th rule of his duties; also to the authority of Mr. Inskip. "They (the presiding elders) are also required to give all the information they can, by letter or otherwise, to the bishop, concerning the state of the work in the territory committed to their supervision and care." "By constantly travelling through his district, and having frequent and *confidential intercourse*, (how admirably adapted to encourage tattlers, and for enemies to report scandal!) with the ministry and membership of the church, he is prepared to INFORM the bishops of the *talents* and usefulness of the former (ministers) and the wants and preferences of the latter." P. 139. What a Jesuitical system of *espionage* truly is this! Every despotism on earth has its system of *espionage*, supported at great cost. Russia pays annually millions, and it costs Methodism in America an immense sum for its host of presiding elders!!

"By keeping a *watchful eye over all the travelling and local preachers* in the district." P. 141. The ministers of Jesus Christ have no one to watch them but their Master, while the ministers and servants of men have men set over

them to watch and keep a spying eye upon them! What a degrading vassalage! "It is known that the presiding elders are placed in the position they now occupy, to give the necessary information to the bishops in making out the appointments." "The whole question of our appointments is left under the conjoint direction of the bishops and presiding elders." P. 149.

Thus we see the travelling preacher, the *worker*, has two masters to please, and the most exacting one is the inferior. Unless he is a couching sycophant at the feet of his presiding elder, he stands no chance for a good appointment with the bishop. There is no alternative left him—please his lord, the presiding elder, or be kept in the swamps and the mountains. The world, from a knowledge of this peculiar wheel in the system, may know how to account for the peculiar *obliquities* of some Methodist ministers who are considered as upright men. They are not their own masters, but are bound to pursue the course, and reflect the sentiments indicated by their immediate masters, the presiding elders. I confess to you, sir, I cannot see how either a high-minded or God-fearing man can submit to be a Methodist minister, since any one having any self-respect would *scorn*, and a man who feared God would not *dare* to become the slave to serve *two masters*, and they *men* in nothing superior to themselves!

I have said *the presiding eldership is invested with irresponsible and oppressive powers.* Inskip says, p. 146, "The presiding elders are chosen by the bishops. And, however unacceptable, the persons thus chosen, may be, to those whose situation in life and ministerial labors they appoint and direct, they have no authority to displace them. Their official action may be altogether erroneous and unsatisfactory; they may be chargeable with the most flagrant and

oppressive favoritism; and yet the parties oppressed, have no power to remove them from office," nor any right provided even to petition to the bishop for their removal, any more than the slaves in the cotton field have a right to dictate who shall be their overseer, or to remove a cruel one! Says Inskip, p. 157, "He may be as an officer, unacceptable in the highest degree; he may be TYRANICAL, OVERBEARING, and INEFFICIENT BEYOND ENDURANCE, and still be secure in his office! His brethren, who know him and labor with him, may reprove and censure (*if they dare!*) but they cannot *displace* him." Nor can they complain to the bishops except at the hazard of their displeasure. Our author confesses "there is no method by which we can communicate with them on this subject, without seeming to be uncharitable or *insubordinate.* In other words, there is no constitutional provision by which we can make our grievances known. In this matter, WE HAVE NOTHING TO DO BUT TO ENDURE AND OBEY." P. 157.*

And yet to such irresponsible officers, what an all-control-

* To show how little regard a bishop will pay to the wishes of a whole conference, we give one example from Inskip's work, p. 157.

"It is true, we may, by a vote of an annual Conference, make a *general* request of the bishops, as was done a few years since by one of the Western Conferences. * * But what can we accomplish by these things? The result may easily be foreseen. In one of our annual Conferences, the name of which it is not necessary to mention, a resolution was passed, requesting the bishops not to appoint the same persons to the office of a presiding elder for more than one term, etc. The design of this was to remove from the office, individuals who had been in it so long, as to produce serious dissatisfaction. The issue of the matter was, the ensuing General Conference declared all such resolutions null and void. And this could not have been otherwise in view of the constitution. The resolution referred to, was too *general*, and not sufficiently specific. And, furthermore, as already stated, it was *unconstitutional*, hence null and void."

ling power over the travelling preachers is delegated! *The presiding eldership constitute the bishop's Cabinet!!*

"The presiding elders of an annual Conference bring forward all candidates for admission into the travelling connection, and for deacon's or elder's orders. They constitute what is designated the bishop's *cabinet;* and frequently direct or control the entire business of the Conference. P. 144.

"That they may be correctly informed, and act understandingly, and distribute the workmen so as to make the best use of their talents, the bishops must be in communication with the elders. And this communication, of course, should be strictly confidential. The bishops know to but a limited extent either the talents and qualifications of the men to be stationed, or the wants and condition of the places to which they are to be appointed. It is hence apparent, from the circumstances and necessity of the case, the office is very little inferior to the Episcopacy itself. P. 145.

"From various causes, and in a manner not necessary to mention here, the presiding eldership has, in a great measure, become the appointing power of the Church."

What must be the natural workings of such irresponsible power, but to foster favoritism and oppression? Let Inskip testify, pp. 143, 144—also pp. 150, 151, and 152.

"It may be esteemed treasonable and hazardous to intimate any thing of the kind; but it is true we have imbibed the idea, that the presiding eldership, is an instrument by which a system of favoritism is fostered, and crafty and improper influences are brought to bear upon the stationing authorities of the church. That such views are frequently unfounded suspicions, and without any warrant from the facts in the case, will be cheerfully admitted."

"Still, the controlling influence the elders exert, has a tendency to excite the jealousy of their brethren, who, in

the present state of things, often seem to have but little to do at an annual Conference, save to receive their appointments."

The *irresponsibility* of the presiding eldership, IS FRAUGHT WITH THE MOST DANGEROUS TENDENCIES; and is contrary to our economy and usage in all other respects."

If Inskip may presume to say this, what may I not presume to say? I will say, that if he is correct, then the presiding eldership is not an office of church appointment. I will say it is an office that, exerts a debasing and degrading influence upon the itinerant preachers. "But the custom of which we speak is so much opposed to what may be called Methodistic propriety, and so entirely at variance with the general *spirit of our institutions*, that it seems to us, we use the mildest terms that can be employed in alluding to it; and say the least we can in pronouncing it, *pernicious*. We refer to the fact of the presiding elders, at the close of their official term, nominating their successors. That the bishops are shut up to the necessity of regarding, or are, in the proper sense of the term, bound by such a nomination, we do not pretend to say. But that they generally make the appointment in this manner, is a fact of common notoriety."

"And again, the presiding elders, it is known, are all in council with the bishops in reference to their *own appointments*, as well as those of others. This gives them undue and improper advantage over their brethren. They have an opportunity of influencing the minds of the bishops that all do not enjoy. This circumstance has frequently produced serious and well-founded complaints."

There is a growing opposition to this office—to this system of espionage among Methodists. See Inskip, p. 143.

"Nevertheless, we cannot but perceive, that the office is

by no means of as good report among us, as in times gone by. Its utility is becoming a question of serious doubt with many."

"It has been proposed to remedy all the difficulties by *abolishing* the office altogether."

These are some of the objections urged by your own authors. But, sir, I object to the office and its powers, for reasons infinitely superior to all these. It is unscriptural and contrary to the spirit of our holy religion. I need not waste ink in proving that the Scriptures do not warrant such an officer. Wesley, converted by the writings of Lord King, declares, and all your standard authors unequivocally declare, that there are but two orders of ministers recognized in the New Testament—deacons and elders. Where, then, is your authority for two other orders of ministers—rather officials—that do not preach, i. e. presiding elders and bishops? If you say that the presiding eldership is not an order, only an office, by what authority do *you recall* a minister from a work to which he solemnly declared, at his ordination, he regarded the Lord Jesus had called him to serve under you in *ruling* and *judging* alone? There is no more authority in the Bible for such an officer as a presiding elder than for such an order or office as that you *presume* to occupy. Which one of his apostles or disciples did the Saviour authorize to take charge of all the elders and deacons, travelling and local preachers and exhorters, in a certain district? Which one of the apostles presumed to *dare* to exercise the power of a Methodist presiding elder, much less those of a bishop, over even *one* of the other apostles, or the humblest preacher, deacon, or *private member* of the church? Did Paul, or Peter, aspire to such a preëminence? Never. It would have cost either of them his soul to have assumed such Antichristian powers! Did not the Saviour most posi-

tively and peremptorily forbid any one of his disciples to assume the mastery over his brethren, and as positively command *His* disciples not to recognize such claims? That he alone was their Master, their King, their Lawgiver, and they were to serve and obey none but him? And yet, sir, you declared at your ordination that you felt truly called to the ministration of the office of a Methodist Bishop, according to the *will* of our Lord Jesus Christ. Has our Lord Jesus changed his mind since he left the world, or how *dare* you, who exercise lordship over your brethren, declare that you are *inspired* or *called*, or in anywise *authorized* to do so by the will of the King of Zion! I solemnly charge you, Bishop Soule, in common with your colleagues in the Episcopacy, with the assumption and exercise of impious and *Anti*christian powers, in presuming to lay your authoritative commands upon your brethren, and in creating the office of presiding elder, and imposing his irresponsible and oppressive jurisdiction upon those whose *right* and *duty* it is to enjoy the glorious liberty and freedom, wherewith Christ makes his people free. Christ never instituted a spy judge over his followers, and they should forever scorn to acknowledge or submit to one.

N. B. The changes in this section are so slight as not to require a change in the plates of this book. There is a transposition in Ans. 5, but no material change.

LETTER XIX.

The Travelling Preacher—the allegiance required—the duties imposed—the servants of servants—yet in their turns allowed to exercise great authority over the rights of the laity—the class leaders and 4th wheel or stirrers—stewards—An important question, "Do not the clergy, the rulers of Methodism belong to a Church by themselves, the Annual Conferences, or Preacher's Church into which no layman can enter?—a Church within a Church!!

Dear Sir:—In examining the machinery of your system, one can but acknowledge the admirably adaptedness of the various parts to accomplish the end designed—a tremendous consolidation, and the most arbitrary and irresponsible episcopal control. The society of the Jesuits has been compared to a sword, the handle of which is at Rome, and the point *everywhere.* I can only compare the polity of your society to an immense screw, the lever of which is in the hands of the bishops, and the controlling, crushing power is felt upon, and through every part of it. No civil despotism was ever more powerful and efficient — efficient because despotic! Having examined the powers of the Episcopacy, and the Bishop's Cabinet, *i. e.*, the presiding elders, I proceed to notice the relative position of the workers — the travelling

preachers—and note the wheel that drives them, and the wheels they move in their revolutions.

The following are the degrees through which a candidate for the PREACHER'S CHURCH,—"full connection" with the annual Conference, must pass.

1. He must obtain the privilege from his society, or class meeting to *exhort*. This is of easy accomplishment. And mark it, this is the only instance, in the life of a Methodist preacher, when his name comes before the laity. They are simply allowed to permit him to exhort, but this act is not saying that he may be a preacher, or their ruler the balance of his life. It is also claimed by Methodist preachers, that they are the representatives of the laity, their duly elected representatives. When? When the laity merely allowed them to *exhort*, nothing more. Why, sir, *to exhort* is the inalienable right of every Christian without a license from the brethren! But who ever heard of representatives who held their office for life, and were not amenable to their constituents—the people? They are such *representatives* as kings and popes are. Having obtained his recommend to exhort, he supplies himself with Wesley's sermons, and, if he has a good memory, and strong lungs, he shortly becomes a right sharp preacher, and is quite an important actor in camp meetings, and especially "in the altar."

His next step is to obtain a recommendation from the Quarterly Court Conference. If he is on good terms with his preacher, and his honor, the judge of the court, (*i. e.*, the presiding elder,) this is more than willingly granted. He remains under the jurisdiction of this quarterly body, until he obtains a recommendation from it to the Annual Court, as a suitable person for deacon's orders. This being done, he is examined, and if accepted he is allowed to enter upon a two years' trial, after having taken the following oath.

The bishop asks:

"*Will you* REVERENTLY *obey them to whom the charge and government over you is committed, following with glad* MIND *and* WILL *their* GODLY *admonitions?*

Ans. "*I will endeavor to do so, the Lord being my helper.*"

There are thousands of pious ministers, who would suffer imprisonment and death at the stake, before they would take the above oath, admitting as it does that there are any spiritual rulers over them, to whom the charge and government of them has been committed by the Saviour, and pledging supreme and *reverential* obedience, due to God only!

The candidate now enters upon his second probation, which must continue two years, before he is allowed to join Conference in full connection, in order to give full proof of his devotion to the discipline and his *allegiance* and *obedience* to his spiritual lords and masters. He must learn *to be ruled* before he is allowed to *rule* others. This training of two years is important to render the young neophyte perfectly plastic and tractable, and properly to break him into the harness, and accustom him to the bit and collar. If he proves to have too much spirit to crouch under human dictation, and possessed of too much republican and Christian democracy to be made a slave of in the church, the home of Christ's freemen, who acknowledge and call no *man* their master, he can be rejected as a crooked stick, or as a Methodist writer justly says, "*a good enough Christian but unfit for a Methodist!* See Bond, p. 20.

But if he submits with a glad mind and will, and reverently obeys during his two years of probation, he is brought forward again for examination, for admission.

This is made solemn and awful, to make a deep and lasting impression upon his mind.

The examination is preceded by fasting and prayer. A

lengthy examination and catechising them commences. We have not space for all the questions. The burden of the whole is to pledge him to teach and enforce every point in the discipline, and above everything required in a Methodist preacher, to obey his clerical masters. We hear young ministers say now-a-days, that a great part—or some parts of the discipline are inoperative; and not required of them, nor by them. Now, sir, I mistrust the honesty of every minister who says this, and I affirm that he asserts *what he knows to be false!* If he fails or refuses to execute strictly every "point" of the discipline, he is a perjured man; he violates his solemn oath and sacred pledges, before God and men. If he changes or "mends" the rules, he does the same.

With these remarks let us notice some of the pledges required in his examination.

"Do you know the rules of society—of the Bands? Do you keep them? Have you read the form of discipline? Are *you willing to conform* to it? Have you considered the rules of a preacher, especially the 1st, 10th, and 12th? Will you *keep them for conscience* sake?" Let us see what these so especial rules are.

Rule 1. "Be diligent. Never be unemployed; never be triflingly employed," &c., &c., all very good.

Rule 4. "TAKE NO STEP TOWARDS MARRIAGE WITHOUT FIRST CONSULTING YOUR BRETHREN;" those to whom are committed the care and government over him of course. I would sooner send a young man to consult his mother, than to all the bishops and presiding elders in Methodistdom. But this is rule 4.

Rule 10. "Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not *mend* our rules, but KEEP them; not for wrath *but conscience sake.*"

Rule 11. * * last clause "And remember!—a Methodist

preacher is to mind every point great and small, in the Methodist Discipline! "Therefore you will need all the SENSE (?!) and grace you have." Does this look like any part of the Discipline is inoperative or obsolete?

Rule 12. "Act in ALL things, NOT ACCORDING TO YOUR OWN will, but as a SON in the Gospel." The son must obey his father in all things, but how many fathers have these Methodist's Sons—the bishops and presiding elders; but Christ says call no man father—papa. "As such it is your DUTY. [I sin when I neglect my *duty*, do preachers *Sin* when they violate some little part of the injunctions of their fathers?!] to employ your time in the manner which WE direct; in preaching and visiting from house to house; in reading, meditation and prayer. ABOVE ALL, [all what? reading the Bible or prayer to God for his guidance and will to act for his glory.] Above all: if you labor with us in Lord's vineyard, it is needful you should do that part of the work which WE advise, at THOSE TIMES AND PLACES which WE JUDGE MOST FOR HIS GLORY?" Does not the above absolve the Methodist preacher from his allegiance to Jesus Christ, from all concern to learn the will of Christ concerning him, and all concern about so living, and acting as HE himself judges for the glory of his God? Do not his masters take all the above concern off his conscience, and take the absolute direction of him and his conscience into their own keeping? If he should be asked in the judgment, "why have you not labored where I by my providence have directed, and with an eye single to my glory?" What could the poor Methodist preacher answer, but, "Lord, I was taught that was not my business to consult thy will or consider where thou didst call me to labor, or what I might regard as promotive of thy glory, but the Bishops and Presiding Elders whom I served, taught me to form no mind

or will of my own and above all reading and praying; to obey them, and to labor where and do what THEY should judge most for thy glory!!" And do those who plead these things and thus yield themselves up to serve men, consider themselves the servants of Christ?!!!

After a sufficient examination and the candidate is fully pledged and committed to his chief rulers, he is required to seal his promises with a solemn oath; which we consider equal in stringency and *impiety* to that taken by any Roman Catholic priest, or Jesuit to the general of his order.

It is demanded of him *in the name of God and his Church.* See Dis. p. 207.

The Bishop asks—"Will you reverently obey your chief Ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you; following with glad mind and will their GODLY ADMONITIONS, submitting yourselves to their GODLY JUDGMENTS.

Vow, "I will do so, the Lord being my helper."

I cannot express the horror at all that is implied in this oath, or the complete renunciation of all concern for God's mind, will and glory on the part of a professed Christian minister! Grace assisting me, I should a hundred fold choose to suffer at the stake than to take such an oath to *an arch-angel*, much less to sinful men. Selling myself to work their wills in preference to the will of my Saviour!

Having taken this oath, the candidate is initiated into fellowship in the Methodist Preacher's Church, and is put in full and complete connection with the great outer driving wheel—the bishops; and is henceforth under their supreme jurisdiction. He is no longer his own—no longer a minister of Jesus Christ to be governed exclusively by him—he has renounced his allegiance to the Saviour as his only master, king and lawgiver, and sworn allegiance to men. He

belongs to his "chief ministers," and is enrolled among the "regulars"—to go whither they send him; and go he *must*, and without asking any questions, and do he must whatever it is *their* pleasure to command him to do. God sends *his* ministers—and the Methodist bishops send theirs. Said Bishop Asbury, "Show us [the bishops] the people who have no preacher, and whose language we understand, and we will send them one; yes, we will send them one; for Methodist preachers are not militia who will not cross the lines; they are *regulars*, and they MUST go."—*Bond E. of M., p.* 19.

He has now entered freely upon his ministerial career. He has at least a praiseworthy ambition—it may be a purely *selfish* one. There are glittering prizes placed before his eyes. They are pointed out to him and he is urged to canvass for their attainment. He becomes tired of Mountain Cove and Piney-wood Circuits—the ministerial colleges of the Conference—he covets first one of the many rich neighborhood Circuits, then a town station, where there is better society, more fashion and *pay*—then he longs to become a metropolitan "star." Having tasted of a little authority over the laity, and being subject to the rigorous rule of his superior officers, he thirsts for *power*—the idol of the human heart. He looks upon the presiding Eldership with a longing eye. He has learned the characteristics that render a preacher popular with the Circuit Judge, and his reverence the Bishop, he prostitutes himself to the work, wins the prize, and enjoys a seat in the Bishop's Cabinet. But his ambition is not satisfied while there is a gaol unwon. The exercise of power, and the incense of flattery that power always secure, are gratifying to the pride of the human heart. The Bishops are getting old, and must die some day. Some Presiding Elders will be elected to wield their scepters, and why may not he as well be bishop as

any other man? exactly—why may he not desire and labor for it, for the Apostle says (in King James' version) "he that desireth the office of a bishop, desireth a good work." Thus we see that the *Stirrup* is the first step of ascent to an Episcopal Throne!

I regard such a system of Ecclesiastical polity, offering an ascending scale of ministerial station, and rank and power, as not only manifestly unscriptural but eminently *pernicious and corrupting*, fostering as it does the rankest ambition in the ministry, and the cultivating of all those ways and means by which alone these ambitious ends can be attained when success depends not upon the will of the membership, but is in the arbitrary gift of clerical superiors, and where

"Thrift only follows fawning."

What young minister of common ambition, or self-respect, if you please, would not desire to gain the rank of a presiding elder? I doubt if there was ever one who had not determined to be the Judge of the Quarterly Court before he had completed his Freshman year in his Mountain Cove, or Piney-wood College—if not before he had graduated an *Exhorter*.

If one reaches the deaconship with his obtuseness unpenetrated with such an idea, the bishop is very careful to enter it in the ordination service, a clause of which reads thus:

"May they [the young deacons] so well *behave* themselves in this *inferior* office, that they may be found worthy to be called [not by God, but by the bishop] into the *higher ministries* in thy Church!" Page 196.

Their chief ministers, to whom is committed the government of them, are very willing for them to be ambitious, because they will be proportionably zealous, obedient, and subservient to their most arbitrary and despotic wishes

Mark the means by which a Methodist preacher can hope for advancement in rank—elevation is alone in the gift of the superior clergy. They confer it only upon their favorites. The aspirant must labor to gain the superior good will of the presiding elder, and he can only do this by his zeal for Methodism, and the most extreme subserviency to his wishes. Here is a fair field, and the list open for flattery, fawning, and man worship.

There is not one only seeking for good circuits, or town or metropolitan stations, or a cabinet appointment, but scores of aspirants; hence what rivalship, what canvassing, what envy. But another feature in Methodism. Preachers are allowed and encouraged to be *informants* upon one another, and the presiding elder keeps his ears open and invites evil, as well as good reports. Indeed it is a part of his business to be a general scandal-monger. None but those who have toiled in the list can understand the pulling and working against, and checking each other in every way imaginable on the part of the rivals. What depreciation, insinuations, and misrepresentation often of each other. What tales and reports get to the elder's ears. Each known aspirant is under the strictest surveillance of all others. Many a one's popularity is blighted with the presiding elder, and he can discover no trace of his enemy. What histories of "defeated efforts to reach the presiding eldership" circuit riders might write. What wrongs and injuries received. What partiality and favoritism, without merit, could be revealed!

Now I think it can be clearly shown that all this ambition, all these efforts for elevation, all the influences brought to bear upon them, tend to make these aspirants the more blind and reckless advocates of the peculiar and obnoxious features of the Discipline, and to have no mind, will, or conscience of their own, but to accomplish by all means the

wishes of their leaders. We have shown that the favorites of the presiding elder are the favored ones. He acts upon the principle, "They that honor me will I honor." They must give themselves blindly* to the work of Methodism, to swell its numbers, and blindly to do the will of them that sent them. If opposition to other denominations is pleasing to his chief ministers, he must oppose contrary to reason or revelation. His zeal for his society must eat him up. By patience in so doing, he fixes the eye of his clerical superiors upon him. It will not do for him to hesitate about the propriety or scripturality of the measures he is advised to pursue; to question whether any thing enjoined in the Discipline agrees with, or is opposed to the teachings of God's word; to hesitate, or to execute its laws weak-handed or faint-heartedly, would black-mark him at once. He must not consult his conscience. Suppose his presiding elder de-

* A Methodist preacher vows to execute every point, great and small, in the Discipline. The blind and unprincipled subserviency implied in this can only be imagined, when it is remembered that the Discipline is subject to quadrennial changes. When the preacher pledges this, he does not and cannot know what he may be binding himself to endorse and observe. The Discipline may possess new features, new laws, after the next conference far more unscriptural than the present; yet he must vow obedience to them, and to execute them, *whatever they may be!* The present Discipline has rules for the extirpation of the evil of slavery. Should a preacher refuse to execute this abolition feature, he is liable to exclusion this year. The present Conference, now in session, will doubtless abolish the abolition features of the Discipline, and the ten thousand preachers must change their principles, and doctor their consciences in eight and forty hours, to conform to the new law, for should they execute the old one after the new one has passed, they would be excluded at once—excluded *to-day* for executing a law that they would have been excluded *yesterday* for refusing to execute! Such are the ROTARY consciences required in Methodist preachers.

nied that immersion is even warranted by the Scriptures; suppose he pronounces it indecent and disgusting, as all of your editors and most of your preachers do, and dissuade its use in his diocese, would it do for him, a circuit rider, to admit publicly or privately that immersion is scriptural baptism at all, or to immerse a person requesting it, *however conscientiously he may have believed it a Bible baptism before?* Would he cultivate the good will of his elder, should he oppose his judgment and wishes? His hopes of elevation would be blighted at once. But why should he trouble himself about right or wrong, or to inquire what is scriptural or not in church practices? Has he not repeatedly pledged and sworn to observe every part, great and small, in the Discipline? What use has a Methodist preacher for a *conscience* or *judgment* of his own? Has he not vowed before God to have no mind or will of his own about *anything*,* and to "*reverently obey*" and "follow with glad mind and will," and "submit himself to the godly *judgments*"† of his clerical masters? He must "go it blind," shut his eyes, deafen his ears, stifle his conscience, harden his heart, and put his reason and judgment to open shame, should light, or argument, or truth, or God's Spirit, conflict with the interests of Methodism, or the requisitions of his "chief ministers, to whom is committed the government over him!!‡

Have we not seen repeated exemplifications of this spirit, and blind recklessness in the practice of Methodist preachers, when the interests of Methodism were suffering from the light and progress of truth in any given town or community? It is easy to be accounted for. It is the corrupting *system*, that the peculiar influences and iniquitous appliances

* See Dis. p. 77. † Dis. p. 210.

‡ We are aware that this is denied, but we will attempt to show it in the letter on the "Rights of the Laity."

under which Methodism works its ministers, that forces them into such ungodly measures, and not because they themselves are naturally more depraved in heart than other men. Thus we have seen that a system that more completely subordinates its ministers to the *perfect* and *irresponsible dictation* and *domination* of the episcopacy and its cabinet, could not be well devised.

But while he surrenders to be *ruled*, he is allowed irresponsible authority and rule in return, under the eye of his overseers—and a very important consideration in the shape of a pecuniary provision for life, or good behavior.

1. He is allowed the use of the keys of Mr. Wesley's kingdom, which he can open to whom, and shut against whomsoever he pleases, i. e., he can receive into or exclude from the society he rules, whomsoever he wills.* This clothes him with great importance in the eyes of the members. It is a fearful prerogative.

2. He is allowed the absolute control over one class of officers or servants at least, and the virtual control of another.

The Class Leaders (the fourth wheel) are the creatures of the preachers in charge. He can make and unmake them at his sovereign pleasure, without being required to give a reason to any one. It is enough that they prove *unacceptable* to him. This is the highest office to which a lay member can aspire. He is virtually the pastor of the portion of society committed to him. It is incumbent upon him to inquire how every soul prospers, not only *how each person observes the outward rules*, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God, and freely inform the preacher. His influence with him is very great. It becomes the members

* See Dis. p. 67.

to keep on good terms with their leaders, or they will very likely be called to account *for something.* The class leaders not only examine and confess their classes weekly, but they have charge of the "love feasts," and decide who may or may not be admitted.

Stewards are virtually under the control of the preacher. He is allowed to nominate his stewards for election by the Quarterly Court. If they prove unacceptable, he can easily procure their dismission by that body, since the majority of it consists of his fellow-preachers—and they will assist him in this, to be assisted in like cases in return, and of class leaders, who must do the will of their preachers, or be dismissed. The duty of the steward is to collect the expenses, and decide upon the provision allowed the preacher. He is also allowed to watch and inform upon the members.*

The Methodist *itinerant* preacher has secured to him a comfortable support for life. While he preaches he receives a better salary than the majority of the ministers of other denominations, from his circuit or stations, and when he is unable to preach by reason of failing health or old age, he receives a life annuity from the proceeds of the book-fund.

Methodist preachers have made a pretty general impression upon the people that they preach for almost nothing, while other preachers receive fixed salaries. Now, I have no objection to preachers being paid, and *well* paid; few, if any, receive as much as they should; but I do object to *false impressions.* The Discipline seems so arranged as to keep back the support of the preacher, or to make the impression that he receives only $100, and if married the same for his wife, and a few dollars for each of his children.

Suppose you turn to page 265–266, and foot up the prob

* Dis. p. 259.

able allowance made to a preacher with a family of five children.

Allowed for himself and wife, ...	$200
" three children over 7, ...	72
" two " under 7, ...	32
" House rent, ...	150
Furniture, ...	50
Table expenses, say	300*
Fuel, and horse and cow feed, ...	150
Travelling expenses, ...	25
	$979

Besides all this, provision is made for all his "occasional distresses," as sickness, &c., &c. Now, add his marriage fees and presents to the above sum, and we see a pretty handsome support. If he is stationed in town or city, he would be allowed much more. The support received by the bishops is from $1,500 to $2,000. Surely Methodist preachers should be the last to complain. With such a support, and his old age snugly provided for, he can say, without feeling very bad,

"No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in this wilderness."

Methodist ministers are required by the Discipline to act as colporteurs to sell the books of the "Book Concern." Also to act as agents for their Church papers, and to place them in every family, if possible, in their own circuits. This accounts for the immense sale and wide-spread circulation of Methodist books, and the tremendous subscription list of their papers. They can collect every cent of the accounts due from their ministers or members, since the ministers are

* Let the reader insert those of his own family for one year, if he thinks $300 is too much

empowered to arraign the delinquent before the Society, and exclude him, if he is able and wont pay, and the minister is subject to trial, unless he pays. Look at it in the light of a circulating medium, the itinerancy is one of surprising efficiency. For it is not only made their solemn duty to sell their books, and gain patronage for the papers; but it is made their *pecuniary interest to do so.* The nett profits of the Book Concern and of their Church papers, goes into the fund, which is used to pay up any deficiency in their salaries, and to support them when superannuated. Unless their books are sold and their papers patronized, they would not only not receive that part of their salaries which their circuits or stations fail to raise, but would have no fund to support them when superannuated. It is the most efficient scheme of colportage in operation upon the face of the whole earth, and to it Methodism owes the rapid spread of its Societies in the United States. Methodist circuit riders are *every where*, sent to follow the tide of emigration into every new country, anticipating the movements of any other denomination, and preoccupying the ground with their peculiar views, their books and their papers. Every man who can sell a few dollars worth of books or get a subscriber to their Church papers is useful to the Conference and is generally *used.* If he is not fit to operate in old communities, he is sent to the frontier settlements and territories.

THE METHODIST PREACHER'S CHURCH.

Before closing this lengthy letter allow me to ask for information which is very much desired, and awakening no little inquiry of late, "To what Church do the chief ministers of Methodism—bishops, and travelling preachers belong?"

No one ever saw their names enrolled upon the class papers, or upon the books of any local Society, I believe, and

the question arises, Where are their names kept? On some Church or class-book, if they belong to the Church or Society. The local preachers and laity have their names enrolled upon the books of the Society in any given place, and upon the class-papers of such a Society or "Church," but who ever saw the name of a travelling preacher, or presiding elder, or a bishop, upon the books of local societies, or Methodist Churches? Where, then, are their names kept? Where do the rulers belong? To the Church? Not if the local societies are churches.

If I understand your scheme at all, the rulers have a church especially for themselves; they do not deign to associate with the ruled—the "*ignoble vulgus.*"

The rulers all belong to the *Annual Conferences*, and no where else can their names be found. To the annual Conference are they amenable, and at its bar they are tried. I respectfully inquire if the annual Conferences, in and of themselves, are Christian Churches, or Churches at all?

If so they are very singular ones, for they are Churches all the members of which are ruling preachers, and where do we find an instance of such a Church in the New Testament? All annual Conferences are composed of preachers, and rulers only! If annual Conferences are not Churches, then Methodist preachers belong to no Church—not even to the Methodist Episcopal Church!! If they are members of a Church at all, then are the annual Conferences' CLERICAL CHURCHES, or the RULERS' CHURCH—an imperial and privileged body, into which no layman can ever enter, more than Peri into Paradise!*

* I hope my brethren ministers and members wil aid me in asking this question until an answer is obtained: "ARE ANNUAL CONFERENCES CHURCHES?" If not, To what Church do the rulers of Methodism belong?

Is not this so? But, to which body you, yourself, and your fellow-bishops belong—whether to the Societies, or the members' Church, or to the travelling preachers' Church, or whether you bishops have a Church of your own—the *bishops' Church*, or as privileged characters, belong to *no Church*, I am unable to learn. I know you can be disciplined by General Conference alone, and I suppose that persons must belong to the jurisdiction or government that can discipline them.

I would respectfully ask you, Bishop Soule, if the apostles, and ministers and bishops of the New Testament Churches were not members of the *same body* that the brethren were? See Acts i., 13, 16. Were not the twelve apostles members of the Church at Jerusalem with *Mary and the one hundred and twenty disciples*, and the same body to which the three thousand were added? Answer this. Were not the bishops or pastors of the Churches of Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and the Angels of the Seven Churches of Asia, members of those local bodies? Why then are you not a member of the society in Franklin, and why are not your ministers members of the societies? Again, Were not each of the above Churches, in and of itself, a complete Church? Did it take two, or five, or *all* the Seven Churches of Asia to make *one* Church, as it does all the Methodist E. Societies in the whole South to make the Methodist Episcopal Church South?

Is one of your local Societies a *complete* Church? Is the McKindree Society in this city a complete Church? Is the so-called Methodist Church in Franklin, within a short distance of your house, a Church? If so, are you a *member* of *it?* If not, in what local body is your membership? I ask for information not through a prurient curiosity. I wish to understand your polity so as not to misrepresent it. I am

an honest inquirer after truth. I do not wish to misrepresent your Church polity. I seek information of you, the highest source of authority in Methodism. If I am *wrong*, however humble and unworthy *you* may regard me, will you, if a child of God, deny me light, and allow me to go on in error, misleading and causing others to sin? Be it far from you.

N. B. The change in the Discipline for 1859, is in favor of the preacher. It is now $150 and family and traveling expenses, for a single man, and $300 and the same for a married preacher—and for children under seven years, $25 each, and over seven years, $40 each. A very large increase.

LETTER XX.

LOCAL PREACHERS.

What hey forfeit in locating—Strong considerations to keep them in the saddle—they are degraded—The petty oppression to which they subject themselves—Loss of influence.

Dear Sir:—A travelling preacher is evidently considered the most useful to your Society, and, indeed, the only legitimate preacher; consequently, the strongest possible influences are brought to bear upon the preachers to keep them in the saddle, and every obstacle thrown in the way to deter them from locating, or becoming pastors.

The office of Pastor, the most common office of the Christian minister in the days of the Apostles, is wholly *ignored* by you, and that of the Evangelist substituted in its place. Thus you oppose your wisdom to that of the Head of the Church. You have no pastors settled with your Societies to go in and out before them, whose daily example and pious living, and the influence of whose whole life of godliness may be exerted upon the members and their rising families. Your people have "strangers" for their shepherds. So soon as they come to know and love the preacher, his labors are interrupted in the midst of the greatest usefulness, and he

is torn from them and sent, they know not whither, and a stranger thrust into his place. They are not even allowed the right to petition for his return. This evil and wrong is deeply felt and deplored by preachers and people.

But the travelling preacher—after spending the best of his days, and wearing out the strength and vigor of his manhood in the service of the "Church," under the authority of the bishop,—for reasons satisfactory to himself, determines to "locate."

1. He may have felt the influence of some malignant star —he has not gained the favor of his Presiding Elders, and while he has labored hard and done well, he has been shuffled about from one side of the Conference to the other to fill "hard appointments" to make room for *favorites*. He has become disheartened, broken in spirit, and perhaps rendered measurebly useless from the treatment, and he resolves to locate and spend the residue of his strength in building up the cause in some destitute neighborhood; or,

2. His family may have become large, and his wife sickly, and no longer able to break up and move every year or two and be jaded about from "pillar to post," from one side of the Conference to the other, without the shadow of a reason, and he is compelled to locate; or,

3. He is imperatively required to be more at home, to assist in the proper government of his children; or,

4. His own health has become too feeble to endure the hardships of *itinerancy*, while, as pastor, he might be able to do good service for many years, and Providence seems to open a wide and effectual door of usefulness before him.

Exercising the right of private judgment as to the field in which to labor, which is the inalienable right of every minister of Jesus Christ, he *locates*. Few can appreciate what the step costs him. The polity of Methodism seems to have been ar-

ranged with a design to deter the settlement of its ministers, since it must be done at the sacrifice of everything connected with Methodism dear to a Methodist preacher's heart.

1. When riding his hard circuits in mountains and coves, through rain or snow, heat and cold, preaching, selling books and circulating his church papers, it was a consolation to him to know that he was securing for himself an interest in a fund from which he would be supported when he had worn himself out, and should he fall in the midst of his years, his poor widow and orphaned children would be supported from the fruits of his labors. In locating, from whatever cause, he is cut off from all this, and cuts his wife and children off from any prospective benefit of the labors of a long life. He forfeits all his right and interest in the preacher's fund, which he has spent his best days to accumulate! Is this equitable? Who doubts that multitudes of Methodist preachers *became such* through the influence of this strong consolation held out to them by the elders? And who doubts that multitudes *continue* their connection with the Methodist through the influence of this fund for superannuated preachers, and the widows and children of preachers? Understand me, I do not object to the Church of Christ providing for the old age of its ministers, or the widows and orphans of its ministers, as well as its own poor, *far from it. It is its duty to do so*, but I do regard it as unjust and cruel to subject its ministers to the forfeiture of all this, because they regard it their duty and for the glory of God, to labor *altogether in one field!*

2. But more, he is degraded at once in the eyes of the whole travelling connection, in the eyes of his bishop, of the world, for they take care that it shall be so. He forfeits his membership in the preacher's church—the annual Conference, and he is excluded from it, and refused in all time to come, if he remains a local preacher, all possible connection

with it. He can never again have a seat in that body, participate in the counsels of his brethren, for the extension of the cause for which he has so long and faithfully labored and sacrificed the best of his days.

3. He is degraded from the *rank* he held with them and his name is erased as no longer worthy of appearing among those of the "travelling connection," and he falls one degree in rank and more than one in respect and influence. Indeed he must take the lowest place and be subjected not only to the rule of his equals, but his *inferiors* in every respect, age, learning, character and usefulness.

4. His name is carried down and put upon a *class paper*, and some smooth-chin and brainless boy of a class leader now has jurisdiction over the aged veteran in conjunction with some equally endowed circuit rider! What a fall! what a degradation! How humiliating to a man possessed of self-respect!

5. He is subjected to the most rigid and oppressive *espionage* on the part of those whose love of rule is gratified in subjecting their former sovereign to their wills, if they have no old scores to settle with him.

I said the law, touching local preachers, can be executed by *class leaders* and their preacher in charge, so as to be made insupportably oppressive. It requires that the names of all local preachers shall be enrolled in the journal of the quarterly Conference, and also on a *class paper*, and they *shall meet in class*, if the *distance* of his residence is not *too great*, (and health, of course, will permit, but this is not mentioned,) and *if he neglect he may be deprived of his ministerial office!* Who is to report his absence from "class?" The class leader, of course. Who is to judge if his *health* is sufficient to attend class? Who allowed to decide that his *distance* is not "*too great*," or the weather not too inclement,

or his excuse insufficient? The *class leader* and *preacher* in charge. They cannot exclude him without a hearing, but they can arraign him as often as they please before the quarterly court—the majority of it being *class leaders* and *preachers* in charge, and he being *nothing* but a *local minister*, and can be represented as *troublesome*, disposed to exercise *too much authority* and influence, and greatly in the way—the class leaders and circuit riders can easily come to the conclusion that *upon the whole* he had better be divested of his ministerial office. He can appeal to the annual Conference to be sure, but he knows that there is little favor shown a poor local preacher in that body, and if he has become obnoxious to his travelling preacher, and is considered in the way, he knows there is little chance for him and he yields to his fate, and falls like a noble eagle tormented, wearied, and pecked to death by a flock of tomtits, or as an elephant is said to be killed by a swarm of ants!

If he has rendered himself obnoxious to the presiding elder and preacher in charge, by any exhibition of restiveness under their petty oppression, determines to consult his usefulness and happiness by simply *removing* to a distant neighborhood, he does it at the forfeiture of his ministerial office, for the law empowers the presiding elder or preacher in charge to *give or withhold a certificate* of his official standing as they please, for if he removes *without* a *certificate* from one of these, "he *shall not* (?) be received as a local preacher in other places."* The heart of many a local preacher has been crushed under the cruel and irresponsible domination of ill-disposed and arrogant *class leaders!*

Local preachers are generally a persecuted class. Their motives for locating are questioned. Their fidelity to

* See Discipline p. 107.

"Methodism" is suspicioned. They are regarded as *deserters* from the ministerial ranks. Such a step is made a reproach by the "*riding*" class, and by Methodist Editors. A local preacher thus expostulates with Mr. McFerrin, the editor of the *Methodist Advocate* in this city, who, living at home and on a *fat salary*, can even write disrespectfully of local preachers, and seek to fix reproach upon them. We make an extract from the article as it will throw light upon *feeling* existing, as a necessary consequence, between local preachers and the "*pets*" of the presiding elders:

"You seemed at a loss to understand how we could reconcile it to our consciences to leave the regular work to serve tables. If this does not make it a 'reproach,' at least, by implication, then we were mistaken as to the real force of your language. We are willing to admit that you did not design to make it a reproach, but we still think that the general tenor of your article warranted that conclusion.

"'As to Brother Hicks' remarks about the bishop and his cabinet, fat appointments, &c., &c., &c., *we pretend not to know anything.*' The language we have *italicized* in the preceding sentence, was remarkably well selected. From our personal knowledge of you, we are perfectly satisfied of your sincerity when you say, 'We never *directly* or *indirectly* sought for any special appointment;' yet in reference to *some* you have known, it is indeed well to say, 'we *pretend* not to know anything.' Verily, it is best, in some cases, to be ignorant.

"Some preachers, who, with a great deal of sanctimoniousness, venture to say '*they are not afraid of hard appointments*,' so manage it as to remain located for years near some comfortable farm, or important mercantile interest; and the truth is, there is no such thing as moving them. The bishop dare not do it. He is told plain out, 'Thus far

we will go, and no farther." While others are shuffled about from one side of the Conference to the other; as it were, a matter of pastime. Have you never known a brother, who has done *well* on a circuit for one year, taken up and put down at the same distant point, simply to make room for some of the *immovables?*

"All this, to some extent, has perhaps, grown out of another evil, which seems to be prevalent in every Conference where we have been. We have reference to that system of *favoritism* that ought not to exist among men professing godliness. some are *petted*, and kept constantly under the wings of their presiding elders, while others, equally as deserving, are left to weather the winds and rains as best they can. These things you may 'pretend not to know,' but mere lookers-on in Vienna have seen them. And we honestly believe they have done more toward breaking down our 'time-honored itinerancy,' than anything else."—*Advocate of August* 1853.

If the preacher locates with a very extensive and powerful influence, he becomes obnoxious at once, to the "preacher in charge." Suppose he is a far superior preacher, and the people far more desirous of hearing him, and his opinion far more influential in the town or community, the circuit rider is not long discovering it, nor long in putting on foot a course of treatment to remedy the (whim) *evil.* The class leader is enlisted and the discipline is put into rigid execution against him. It is bruited about that he *wont* or *dont* observe the *rules*--very good but not *pious*—not much of a Methodist in his feelings, for he don't attend class. Every absence is noted, and they are frequent it may be, for not having been accustomed to "attend class," *since it is not required of the privileged orders, Preachers, Presiding Elders, or Bishops* it comes rather hard to him—it is *distasteful*, telling his *experience* over *fifty-two times* a year, and being

asked as many times by a class leader in whom he may have no confidence. "Well, Brother W., how d' you *feel*," or, "well, do you love the cause, brother A.?" Just as though there was any doubt of it!

Not only can he be watched for failing to attend class, the "leader" and preacher being allowed to decide if he lives near enough, and if his health is sufficient, if the weather is good enough, and if his excuses are sufficient or insufficient—which gives them room to bring him to trial a dozen times a year, it may be—but more than this is allowed them; the preacher may reprehend him on a *bare report* that he inadvertently has used *improper words*, and the preacher is the judge what words are improper in a local preacher, or is he reported to be guilty of *improper tempers*, and the preacher is the judge, or of *improper actions*, and his reverence, the preacher in charge, is the judge!* These reports may be *utterly groundless*—may have been put in circulation by the class leader as a part of the scheme to injure him, yet two or three trials for words, tempers, and actions, and as many appeals taken to the higher courts, and that local preacher's influence and usefulness, however great they may have been, are at an end, though he may have been triumphantly acquitted. Such is the frailty of ministerial reputation.

By treatment similar to this and the discipline allows it, and it seems for this very purpose, places the character, usefulness and happiness of the *local preacher* in the hands of the class leader and preacher in charge, and he is shortly reduced to a *cypher*. We know of several local preachers and we have but written their history, and theirs is the history of scores and hundreds. Where is there a local preacher who ever left the circuit with a commanding charac-

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* See Discipline, chap. 4, sec. 2.

ter and controlling influence, who was ever able to keep it five years? More, lives there a local preacher who enjoys to-day one-tenth the influence and reputation he did when a member of the PREACHER'S CHURCH? He is a *degraded man.* He is *snubbed* about and *domineered* over by beardless class-leaders and circuit-riders until he loses his self-respect.

What chapters of the lives and wrongs of local preachers might be written! The iron has pierced through the soul of hundreds; and they, who have been the faithful servants of their society through the vigor of youth and strength of manhood, are going down to their graves *dishonored* and *oppressed* by its unfeeling unkindness and tyranny.

I dedicate this chapter, through you, to the thousands of local preachers in the South-west. A church polity which admits of the corruption of ministerial rank and such irresponsible oppresion of the deserving, cannot be warranted by the Scriptures, but must be displeasing to the Saviour, who said, "So it shall no tbe among *you.*"

LETTER XXI.

The Roman Catholic features—the Doctrine of the Power of the "Keys" held by the Methodist Clergy in common with the Pope—The Divine right to govern held by the Methodists in common with the Pope and Priests of Rome—Methodist Ministers claim the power to admit into, and exclude from, their societies whomsoever they please, and the Discipline grants them the power.

The Christian who enters one of Wesley's societies surrenders all his rights as a man and a Christian, and fearfully jeopardizes both his moral and Christian character.

Dear Sir:—I have frequently declared that, according to my understanding of your Discipline, it virtually gave your ministers supreme power over the societies, empowering them certainly to receive into, and virtually to exclude from them, whomsoever they pleased. For this opinion I have been pronounced a falsifier of your polity, a misrepresenter of your Discipline, and a slanderer of Methodism. Now, sir, I have collected sufficient authority, I think, to clear myself of these charges, and I herewith submit it to your decision. If my proofs and authorities are insufficient to sustain me, I appeal to you, as a professed Christian teacher and father, to show me their inconclusiveness; and which if you do, I promise to retract at once my expressed opinion.

But if I sustain myself—if my opinion is correct, you need not take the trouble to write—your *silence* will be an all-sufficient consent.

I will state my charges definitely.

You hold and teach that the "keys of the kingdom of heaven," were committed alone into the hands of the Methodist clergy, and so the Church of Rome teaches.*

That thus empowered, your ministers can receive into, and exclude from the Church, whomsoever *they* please, allowing the laity, by right, no voice in the matter whatever.

If this be so, every one will admit it is conferring upon Methodist ministers the most dangerous powers. It makes each preacher the absolute Pope, during his short reign, over the societies in his circuit. He can open, and no man, not all the members of the society protesting, can shut—and he can shut the door, though against virtue, piety, and worth, and all the membership cannot open! Is not such absolute priestly power as this repugnant to every Christian heart, as it is opposed to every teaching of the Saviour or apostles? Ought it not to be as heartily abhorred, frowned upon, and repudiated by American citizens—republican democrats, as the same priestly features is in the Roman Catholic Church? Certainly, if true. But is it not true?

I propose to prove it, 1. By the Discipline. 2. By an episcopal decision. 3. By the declarations of your most accredited writers.

1. The Discipline proceeds upon the ground that the supreme governing power of the society is in the hands of the ministry. In the direction for the RECEPTION OF MEMBERS, it

* And so the Presbyterians teach, that the keys were committed into the hands of the ruling elders, who can open and shut the Church at their pleasure

gives no one but the preacher in charge any voice in the matter. It allows the applicant to be recommended to the preacher by the class-leader, but it does not say that the preacher shall receive him upon this recommendation. It provides for the examination of the applicant before the society, but it does not say that, if the examination is satisfactory to every member of the society, the minister shall receive him. Not a word of it. It is left with the preacher in charge to decide whether the applicant shall be received or not. If from another Church, his answers must be satisfactory to the preacher alone. I submit the whole chapter on the reception of members.

"OF THE RECEPTION OF MEMBERS INTO THE CHURCH.

"Q. How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves into the Church?

"A. 1. Let none be admitted on trial, except they are well recommended by one you know, or until they have met twice or thrice in class.

"2. Read the rules to them the first time they meet.

"3. *Let none be received into the Church until they are recommended by a leader, with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been baptized; and shall on examination by the minister in charge before the Church, give satisfactory assurances, both of the correctness of their faith, and their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church.* Nevertheless, if a member in good standing in any other orthodox Church shall desire to unite with us, such applicant may, by giving satisfactory answers to the usual inquiries, be received at once into full fellowship."

No candid man will deny that this is a fair construction of the chapter, and even the uncandid must admit that this construction could be put upon it by the preacher. But I

shall prove it by the decision of Bishop Capers, that the minister in charge has the right to say how the Discipline shall be construed. The Discipline plainly vests the power to receive members in the hands of the minister, consequently to shut the door against whom he will. It also virtually invests him with the power to exclude from the society an obnoxious member.

I submit the whole statute touching the trial of accused members.

Q. 2. How shall an accused member be brought to trial?

A. 1. Before the society of which he is a member, or a select number of them, in the presence of a bishop, elder, deacon, or preacher, in the following manner: Let the accused and accuser be brought face to face; but if this cannot be done, let the next best evidence be procured. If the accused person be found guilty by the decision of a majority of the members before whom he is brought to trial, and the crime be such as is expressly forbidden by the word of God, sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, let the minister or preacher who has the charge of the circuit expel him. If the accused person evade a trial by absenting himself, after sufficient notice given him, and the circumstances of the accusation be strong and presumptive, let him be esteemed as guilty, and be accordingly excluded. Witnesses from without shall not be rejected.

2. But in case of neglect of duties of any kind, imprudent conduct, indulging sinful tempers, or words, or disobedience to the order and discipline of the Church, first let private reproof be given by a preacher or leader; and if there be an acknowledgment of the fault, and proper humiliation, the person may be borne with. On a second offence, the preacher or leader may take one or two faithful friends. On the third offence, let the case be brought before the society, or a select

number, and if here be no sign of real humiliation, the offender must be cut off.

3. If a member of our Church shall be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissension in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or discipline, such persons so offending shall be first reproved by the senior minister or preacher of his circuit, and if he persist in such pernicious practices, he shall be expelled from the Church.

4. Nevertheless, if in any of the above-mentioned cases the minister or preacher differ in judgment from a majority of the society, or the select number, concerning the innocence or guilt of the accused person, the trial, in such case, may be referred by the minister or preacher to the ensuing quarterly meeting Conference.

5. If there be a murmur or complaint from any excluded person, in any of the above-mentioned instances, that justice has not been done, he shall be allowed an appeal to the next quarterly meeting Conference; except such as absent themselves from trial, after sufficient notice is given them; and the majority of the travelling and local preachers, exhorters, stewards, and leaders present, shall finally determine the case.

Under the above statute I claim that any member, however innocent he may be of any immorality, or however pious and conscientious, should he be obnoxious to the preacher, can be excluded by the unreasonable and dangerous powers committed to him.

Suppose A. is the obnoxious member. The minister can bring him to trial upon the plea that he has neglected some duty enjoined *by the Discipline*—he may have conscientious objections to attending band or class-meetings—he may arraign him for conduct he considers improper—the preacher may fret the member, aye, insult him, until he looses the command of his temper, and thus cause him to use improper

words, and then he can indict him for "indulging a sinful temper or words."

The member may conscientiously object to some of the features in the Discipline—say the abolition feature of the notorious 9th section, or against band or class-meetings, or against the close communion feature (see page 155); or he may refuse to have his children sprinkled, because his preacher can show him no authority in God's Word (yet the Discipline requires it); or he may object to giving the Supper to impenitent unbaptized persons, as Methodists do; or he may regard the practice and doctrine of denying baptism to a young convert for six months as unwarranted, or the *seekership* feature of the society as pernicious, or he cannot conscientiously teach and propagate the doctrine of "falling from grace," *i. e.*, the possibility of the ultimate apostacy and damnation of a genuine child of God—a doctrine subversive of the whole economy of redemption through Christ, dishonoring to Christ, and pernicious, and that continually; we say the preacher can arraign him upon some count, for we do not believe that there is one intelligent Christian man in the Methodist societies who can endorse, teach, and applaud every feature of the Discipline. We never conversed with a Methodist ten minutes concerning it, who did not repudiate many of its features.

Well, A. is brought to trial. Now, every lawyer, and every one who has suffered in law, will tell you that the verdict depends on the jury. The lawyer will tell you, "Let me pick my own jury, and I will condemn or acquit any man." Well, the Discipline provides that the accused shall be tried either before the society, or a *select number;* but who is to decide whether he shall be brought before the society or the *select* number? The prosecutor. If he decides that he shall be tried before a "select" jury, who has the power to *select*

the jury, or to decide of how many it shall consist? The prosecuting preacher. Can he not select his own tools and dependants, the class-leaders, to do his work? Certainly. Cannot the preacher employ what witnesses he pleases? Does the Discipline allow the accused the right to object to, or disqualify, any witness or juror? It does not. It is with the preacher to say who shall testify and who sit upon the jury. Both witnesses and the jury may be the defendant's most implacable enemies! But may the preacher remain with his jury while they make up their judgment? The Discipline is silent; he doubtless will feel that it is his duty to do so—since it is his prerogative alone to construe the law, the select number might not know on what law or evidence to render judgment. When the judgment is rendered, who is to award the punishment? The preacher! Comment is unnecessary! Who would give a sixpence for his character or life if the civil law allowed his enemy, clothed with such iniquitous powers to prosecute him?

It is urged that the condemned can appeal to the quarterly court. Certainly he may. But of whom is that court composed? Of preachers, of class-leaders, stewards, and exhorters! It would be natural for preachers to aid each other in ridding their societies of members obnoxious to them—members who are obstacles to their tyranny; and certainly the class-leaders would not willingly offend their masters, and thus lose their favor and offices at the same time! The preachers having things their own way in the quarterly Conferences, a poor layman would stand no chance for justice, if the preacher had decreed his ruin.

It is urged that the preacher in charge is not authorized to construe the language of the Discipline, so as to decree how and by whom the accused shall be tried!

I submit an episcopal decision. The following interrogatory

was proposed to Bishop Capers during the last Conference, held in Trenton, Tennessee. "Has the preacher in charge a right to say *how* the Discipline should be construed?"

Bishop Capers.—"He has the right."

Every man at all acquainted with common law will say that this decision virtually makes each preacher in charge a *supreme* and absolute ruler, aye, despot if you please. Who now will, can deny that the preacher in charge is the pope of the societies he oversees? And what freeborn democratic republican; what Christian man, whom Christ has made *free*, free from petty priestcraft and ecclesiastical despotism; what man who respects his inalienable rights or prizes his Christian or moral character, would trust himself and his character in such a government? Two or three enemies and one circuit-rider, could effect his degradation and ruin at their sovereign pleasure. Think of it, reflect candidly upon it.

Having produced the Discipline and an episcopal decision to sustain me, I now submit the authority of your learned doctors of Methodism, your editors and accredited writers. Dr. Hodgson, in his letter to the *Philadelphia Christian Advocate*, says:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the 'Head over all things to the Church,' conferred upon his apostles, in the words following, the authority not only to teach, but also to *rule*:"

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 16. He also contends for the possession of this same power in the clergy of the present day.

What more do the Popish clergy contend for, to support their lofty and Antichristian pretensions to rule the

Church of God? Is not this passage the very one they rely upon? Do they not put the very same construction upon it? If Methodists are right, the Catholics are equally so. If the Romish clergy impose upon the laity and subjugate them to their authority by the false construction of this passage, so do the Methodist clergy also. Catholics passively allow their clergy to exercise supreme rule over the Church, so do the members of Methodist societies! If *imposition* is practised in the one case, it is equally so in the other. But again Dr. H. says:

"Thus we have been able to trace the *supreme governing* power of the Church from Christ to the apostles, from the apostles to the bishops, presbyters or elders, but no further. All attempts to prove that it belongs, in whole or in part to the laity, utterly fail."

Is not this conclusive? Will not this satisfy you and all Methodists, that I have not misrepresented their polity, when I have declared that you and your clergy claim to exercise, and do exercise, the supreme governing power of the Church, the laity having no part or lot in the matter, any more than the blind, priest-ridden Catholic? What greater power, Mr. Soule, does, or can, the Pope of Rome exercise than the *supreme* power. He claims that the supreme power to rule the Church was committed to Pope Peter, and through him to Pope Pio Nono, while you claim that it was committed to Bishop Peter, who was also an elder, and through a succession of bishops and elders, to you and your elders. What more have you to claim but that those to whom you and your ministers refuse to open the door of the Church, and those against whom you close it, are shut out of heaven, to invest your Church with all the powers and terrors of the Church of Rome, and you and your brother bishops and ministers, with all the impious

prerogatives of the man of sin and son of perdition?!!

In the name of an offended God and insulted Saviour—by all the terrors of the doom of Antichrist and false teachers, I beg, I entreat of you, in all affection and earnestness, think upon these things. Are you not opposing a rival, a human society to the kingdom of Christ? And are you not perverting his laws and the teachings of his word to deceive and mislead into it the unreflecting multitude, who suppose any organization called a Church is as legitimate and scriptural as any other?

But I have still other proof, and of the highest possible authority. It is that of the editor of the great central organ of Methodism, *The Christian Advocate and Journal*, of New-York city. The editor says:

"Now, whatever others may think, the Methodists have always professed to believe that the Head of the Church still gives us pastors and teachers. Some pretenders have deceived us, we admit, and we have reason to believe that the primitive churches were not exempted from this misfortune. But still, we have much cause of thankfulness to God, in the bestowment of so many pastors and teachers whose faithfulness, gifts and success, assure us of their divine call to the ministry. To these we accord the scriptural authority *of admitting to the ordinances of the Lord's house such as believe through their word.*

"*We know nothing of the right of the society to admit members into church fellowship; and the Methodist preacher who concedes this right,* BETRAYS HIS TRUST, *and should be held amenable for his delinquency to his brethren.* We know not if this has ever happened; but Mr. Lee speaks of the contrary doctrine as a matter which is not questionable; and hence we have inferred that he, at least, practised upon this

opinion when he was a travelling preacher; and, as he has done so with impunity, if he has done so at all, we have been led to fear that some portions of the Church may be gradually sliding into a compromise, which would so alter the relation between pastor and people as to subvert our whole economy.

"It will not be understood that we object to the pastor's consulting with the society, or such of the members as he may deem best qualified to advise him, or give him information with regard to the probable sincerity of the applicant for membership. On the contrary, the pastor is bound to do this; but it must never be put to vote, either in the society or elsewhere. Having made the proper inquiries, and being satisfied of the desire of the candidate 'to flee the wrath to come, and save his soul,' he must admit him on probation; and at the expiration of the probationary term, if he have a good report from the leader, and if it shall appear that he has continued to 'evidence his desire of salvation' by a conformity to the requirements in our 'general rules,' the pastor must admit him to full membership, whatever objections may be made to it by the fastidious or censorious.

"But whatever controversy may exist on this question elsewhere, or however it may have been settled among other denominations, it *is certain that 'the right of the society to admit and* EXPEL *church members,'* is not Wesleyan nor Episcopalian Church Methodism. 'We have no such practice, neither any of the churches,' acting under our Discipline.

"The admission and EXPULSION of church members by a vote of the Society, is as absurd in theory as it would be ruinous in practice."

In view of the above proofs I submit the question to you and to the most prejudiced members of your societies, have

I misrepresented your polity? Do not your ministers claim to possess the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" that were committed to Peter? And is not this key power a dangerous prerogative to assume and to use?

Let the convert, about joining one of your societies, remember, that he enters a society in which he must surrender every natural and religious right, place his character and temporal salvation in the hands of irresponsible preachers, who will allow him no voice in administering the government of the society, no voice in deciding who shall be introduced into the fellowship of the society; that he subjects himself to the liability to be tried at any time for the most trifling offence, aye, excluded from the society and Church (of Christ, if Methodist societies be churches of Christ), and his Christian and moral character tarnished for ever, and that, too, for violating *no precept of God's Word*, but simply one of the unscriptural traditions of the elders of the Methodist Episcopal Church! Excluded from the Church, not for having violated the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but the ever-changing testament of his lords and masters, the bishops and travelling preachers! And let such a man remember, also, when he is upon his trial for some real or alleged violation of the Discipline, he is not allowed to challenge the jury that is packed against him, or disqualify a witness, even though he be an enemy that may have been summoned to testify against him, but must submit to be led as a sheep to the slaughter, dumb as a lamb before its shearers.

Were the annals of their trials but published, what gross injustice, what cruel wrongs, what wanton and irremediable injuries would be brought to light! How many innocent and devoted Christians have been sacrificed to the envy or revenge of those appointed by the Gentiles to rule

over him! I appeal to you in the behalf of the inalienable rights of the 500,000 of your members, that you repeal this inquisitorial feature from the statute-book of your societies.

N. B. Since the first publication of this book, the chapter on *Slavery* (see our remarks on page 239, and on Band Meetings, and on Close Communion, save what is in the instruction head, page 155,) have been stricken out, and the rights of the laity have been pretty generally discussed, and in some portions of the Union Methodism is shaking to its centre, touching lay representation. Let discussions continue and increase until every lay Christian shall exercise his right. See a little work, "THE RIGHTS OF LAYMEN."

LETTER XXII.

The principle of the "Key Power" still further examined—It involves the Romish Dogma of Apostolical Succession and Infallibility—All Protestant Church Polities are administered in accordance with this Doctrine—Protestants cannot successfully combat the Papacy.

DEAR SIR:—It must be evident that the authority to deny the laity all participation in the government of the Church, and the doctrine of apostolic succession and Church or clerical infallibility (the Methodist clergy are the Church, since in their hands are concentrated the supreme legislative, judicial and executive powers), rest upon the same ground, and, therefore, you can as reasonably assert the claim of infallibility as the "power of the keys," *i. e.*, the supreme governing power.

The Catholic apostacy rests her infallibility upon the ground you rest your "key power," and indeed she is consistent, for to assert the "power without assuming infallibility in its use, is absurd and preposterous." Mark the reasoning of Rome: "In constituting the Christian Church, Christ directly commissioned a body, or corporation of ministers, or clergymen, to whom he gave authority to expound the doctrines of Christianity to the laity, to administer to them certain ordinances or sacraments, and also to ordain and consecrate other ministers or clergy to the exercise of these divinely-appointed func-

tions, and he promised, in the power of his Spirit, to be with this organization of his Church until the ending of the world."

According to this theory, the Catholic laity, in perfect consistency with its principles, renounce all right to the exercise of any individual or private judgment respecting the doctrines of Christianity, as expounded to them by their clergy, respecting the signification or interpretation of the Scripture writings, and they repose, with unshaken confidence, on the bosom of their Church (or clergy), which must be infallible. Christ has promised to be with her (or them) always, even to the ending of the world.

Is not this substantially the same doctrine for which Drs. Peck and Hodgson contend? for whose language I refer you to my last letter. Does not Dr. H. agree with the Catholics, that Christ gave to his ministers, as a body, the keys, and thus divinely authorized them to authoritatively teach and govern his Church, promising to ratify their acts, and be with them to the end? Is not this the ground of the reason why Dr. H. so vehemently asserts "all attempts to prove that the power to govern the Church, *in whole or in part*, belongs to the laity, fail utterly?—*P. Ch. Ad.*

"With us (Methodists) churches have no more right to elect their pastors than pastors their churches." "The right never existed."—*Ch. Pol.*, p. 127.

But only look the logical consequences of this principle in the face. Let the Catholic draw the conclusion for you. If Christ gave the ministers of the gospel an exclusive authority, in virtue of their divine commission, *to preach the gospel* (i. e. declare and expound what Christianity is and requires), these ministers alone are authorized to say what faith or practice is required from the laity. It is utterly contradictory to the theory of a divinely-commissioned clergy, that the laity should exercise any pri-

vate judgment whatever on any Christian doctrine, institution, or practice; for, to what end or purpose should the ministers of the gospel be commissioned by divine authority *to preach* (*i.e.*, expound all Christian truths), if any layman has the right also to exercise his private judgment on such subjects, and to either approve or reject the expositions of those who have been divinely commissioned by Christ to expound the principles of Christian truth, he also being with them in the presence of his Spirit, until the ending of the present world.

This key power assumption places you side by side with the Catholics, involving you deeply as them in the dogmas of apostolic succession and *infallibility* also: for, if you will admit that Christ gave a divine commission to his ministry, as a body, by which they have an exclusive right, *ex-officio*, to teach and to rule (*i. e.*, to enact, construe, and execute the laws, and decide what faith the Church shall hold), he promising ever to be with them, and to ratify their acts, then you will also admit that he is so with them some way, as to guard them against the enactment of wrong laws, rules, and directions, and erroneous decisions and doctrines.

Do not the laity of your society, as do those of all others governed by a body of men as the clergy alone, or the clergy and a bench of ruling elders, virtually concede the claim, that their clergy or rulers, when in conference or session assembled, are infallible, and, therefore, surrender all right to have a voice in determining the doctrines they are to believe, or the laws to obey and regulations to observe, or whom they should fellowship as fellow-members? Do they not implicitly leave all these, so vitally important, matters, as they do all things else, to the arbitrary decision of the clergy, their rulers, and thus repose as confidently upon the bosom of their ministers as though they believed them as infallible as the poor, deluded Catholic does his priests? If you do

not claim to be infallible, why do you presume to exclude a member from your societies, and one whose piety you will attest by a written certificate, simply because he has not implicitly obeyed a law you have, in the exercise of your authority, imposed upon him, or been able to believe a doctrine you have prescribed for his creed?

You are between the horns of a dilemma. You must openly assert with Rome, infallibility, as a necessary accompaniment of the power of the keys, or surrender the keys, or what is left of them, to the laity. For it is apparent, if you have no peculiar grace above the laity, to secure you from error in determining doctrine and law, and enable you to administer the discipline of the Church, then, in the name of right reason, and man's natural rights, come down and allow the people to govern themselves in Church relation, by the directions of their own proper Master, King, and Lawgiver, Jesus Christ.

But again, just so long as you admit Dr. Hodgson's construction of Matt. xviii., so long will you yield the whole controversy upon these topics in favor of the Papists, and, indeed, upon all the issues between you. Grant your doctrine of the key power, and you must concede the succession, and then you are forced to admit that the Romish apostacy is the only true Church of Christ, since it is the only religious (?) body that has held to these dogmas for 1000 years; and then you can and must grant that all her traditions, as sprinkling, pouring, and infant baptism, and images, and crossings, and penance, and baptismal regeneration, are as proper and binding as any thing in Holy Scripture, for they are all the enactments of an infallible Church! Why should Protestants adopt and practice some and not all of them?

How can Methodists successfully controvert the pretensions and resist the encroachments of the papacy with such a mill-

stone around their necks? They cannot, as we shall soon see, without being entangled in their words, and thrown into a maze of absurdities and contradictions. You cannot assert the right of every individual to exercise private judgment in all religious matters even, without virtually and explicitly denying the positions of these grave Methodist doctors, that Christ divinely commissioned a body of ministers and their successors in office, regularly coming in of course, to rule *supremely* and preach exclusively. You are again forced to an alternative, to deny the divine right of your clergy to rule—surrender the keys, or deny the laity the exercise of private judgment in matters of religion, as the Pope does. You practically decide to act with him. Do you allow the laity the right to judge in matters of doctrine? Did you ever allow them the liberty to decide what should be the articles of their creed? Who determines the creed—the doctrines Methodists are to believe? Their ministers—and they can change them when they see fit. The power and right to create implies the power to *destroy*. Did not the last Conference, South, strike out the whole ninth section? Yesterday a pious Methodist could have been cast out of Methodism as a vile sinnner, for violating that section, but to-day the act of yesterday is not the least sinful or immoral. Who are so potential as to make the *damning* sin of to-day the virtue of *to-morrow* but the infallible rulers of Methodism.

It is proper and praiseworthy, according to the Discipline, for a Methodist to immerse to-day, but after next Conference, it may be a sufficient ground for expulsion in disgrace from the society. Do you allow your members the right of private judgment and the free expression of it, in matters you have laid down in the Discipline—rules and regulations purely of your own invention and enactment? By no means—

a member could not commit a more mortal sin than to inveigh against, or even express his opinion unfavorable to the requirements of the Preacher's Testament—the Discipline; it commands that such an offender shall be excluded, though an eminently pious person. No more do you allow them the exercise of their judgments in the discipline—in the reception and exclusion of members. Not the shadow of any thing that resembles the exercise of private judgment do you allow the laity. I ask you—and through you I ask every Methodist who dares to think—"Do the Romish clergy deny their subjects more than the Methodist clergy deny theirs?

I have discussed this subject at this length, to make clear the operating cause that is leading so many Methodists and Episcopalians back into the bosom of the mother Church. Says a learned reviewer of Dr. McCulloh's work on the credibility of the Scriptures:

"But whatever may be the defects or merits of Dr. McCulloh's work, I apprehend I have sufficiently shown by my preceding remarks, that if Protestants will affirm that ministers of the gospel have a divine commission to exercise ecclesiastical functions, it will be impossible for any Protestant who reasons consistently on such a premise to avoid joining himself to the Catholic Church.

We have had, during the past ten or fifteen years, abundant proof of the correctness of this inference in the history of the Church of England. During this period of time, nearly two hundred clergymen of that denomination have abandoned their living, renounced their friends, and every prospect of temporal benefit as ministers of the national Church, and have joined themselves to the Catholic Church as mere priests in the humblest position and capacity. It would be impossible to impeach their disinterestedness or

integrity in the case, for the Catholic Church either has no rewards to offer them, or at least, has never yet given them any thing equivalent to the temporary advantages they had renounced. The only explanation, therefore, that can be made concerning these remarkable conversions is, that the Protestant theory on the subject of the organization and constitution of the Church of Christ, if consistently carried out, leaves the religious and conscientious Protestant no alternative."

Protestants may never hope to prevail in the coming conflict with the Papacy in this country, until they renounce the "power of the keys"—the unscriptural doctrine of the divine right of the clergy and elders to rule the Church—ay, more, until they repudiate the multitude of Romish traditions they now sanction and enjoin, and take the Bible, and the Bible alone, for their rule of faith and practice. Baptists have this battle to fight alone and unaided, and even to defend themselves against the various Protestant sects in the fight. It is a question of tremendous import.

ARE PROTESTANT SECTS PREPARED SUCCESSFULLY TO WITHSTAND THE INFLUENCE AND POWER OF POPERY, THAT DARKENS OUR LAND, AND BOLDLY THREATENS THE ABOLITION OF OUR INSTITUTIONS, AND THE ULTIMATE SUBVERSION OF BOTH OUR FREE GOVERNMENT AND OUR RELIGION?

We think not, for Protestants are not a *unit*,—they are violently antagonistic—they hate each other with a cruel hatred, scarcely less than they differ from and hate Baptists. Episcopalians are opposed by Presbyterians and Methodists; while Episcopalians and Presbyterians unite in making war upon Methodists. Old and New School Presbyterians and Congregationalists are each seeking the overthrow and annihilation of the other and still, like Pilate and Herod, they

will all unite in a league of amity and friendship to oppose the influence of Baptists, either in seeking the salvation of sinners, or the dissemination of their principles.

Talk about all these uniting in *open communion* at the Lord's table, in token of Church and Christian fellowship! What *impious hypocrisy*, what a solemn *mockery*—a *blasphemous farce* to thus prostitute the holy emblems to the propagation of a *falsehood!* We say Protestants are engaged in a fierce and deadly conflict among themselves, to annihilate each other; how then can they unite against Popery?

But could they unite, wherein can they judge the Catholics without condemning also themselves? What principle of papacy, save that of idolatry, can they attack without their blows recoiling most fearfully upon their own systems and practices?

1. Will they deny that the Roman Catholic Church is a Scriptural Church, and denounce her as the "Mystery of Iniquity," the "Woman dressed in scarlet, the Mother of HARLOTS and *abominations* of the earth?"

Cannot Rome justly say, Spare me, my *dear children*, and honor your mother if you would be respected. Do you not all call yourselves *Protestants* and reformed? You then admit yourselves once to have been a *part of myself*, and to have proceeded forth from me. Do you not to-day call yourselves "branches of THE CHURCH?" Of what Church are you branches, but of the HOLY ROMAN CATHOLIC, in which you all acknowledge you originated, and from which, as a branch from a parent trunk, you confessedly proceed? If I, the Catholic Church, am the *mother* of "*harlots*," and "*abominations*" of the earth, you are all my *children*, and consequently are THOSE HARLOTS and ABOMINATIONS! You do not well, my daughters, thus to cast reproach upon

your *parentage*. I commend to you the example and filialness of your sister, my *favorite* child, the Episcopal Church, which, like a prodigal, is returning to her mother's house.

Could not Rome thus cause the well-aimed blow to recoil upon her Protestant children,* for they are her legitimate offspring, and if she is the mother of abominations and harlots, Protestants are they. If the fountain is corrupt, all the waters that flow from it are also corrupt. If the Church of Rome is an illegitimate church, they are illegitimate churches also. "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt" (Matt. xii., 23), is a principle established by the Great Teacher.

2. Will they deny her the age she claims—that she was founded by Peter, and once presided over by him?

They must do this, else Rome stands forth a Christian and apostolic church, and besides her there is none other. But they deny her claims and charge her with being, from the days of Paul, that spirit of *Antichrist* that worked in the early churches, corrupting Christianity; that it was early repudiated by all the pure churches; that popery had no existence in its present form until established by Hilderbrand, A.D., 606; that no church similar to the Roman Catholic was instituted by Christ or his apostles, or existed within 600 years of their day, and moreover, all the teachings of the Scriptures positively forbid the idea of such a monstrous system.

Cannot Rome reply, "My dear children do you not see that you commit suicide by taking such a position to discredit *my claims!* You cannot, with the least regard to reason,

* Baptists are not Protestants, having never belonged to the Catholic Church, more than to-day. "Baptists," said Sir Isaac Newton "are the only people that never symbolized with popery."

believe that such systems as yours existed in the days of the apostles, surely, each radically differing from, and destructive of the other! Did Paul found an *Episcopal* Church at Antioch, a *Presbyterian* Church at Ephesus, and a *Methodist* one at Philippi? Certainly not. All the churches that were founded in the apostles' times were one and identical in *doctrine*, in *organization*, ordinances and practices. But you do not even claim that you existed in the days of the apostles, or were founded by them. I know the parentage of each of you, and *beheld you when you were born.* You, my most dutiful Church of England, are the offspring of my wayward and licentious boy, Henry VIII., who was led astray by the love of the beautiful Ann Boleyn, A. D. 1534.

"You, my Lutheran daughter, by the bold and impetuous Martin Luther, A. D. 1525.

"You, my Presbyterian daughter, by the stern and austere Calvin, A. D. 1541; while I acknowledge you, dear Methodists, being all the children of Wesley, by the Church of England, (A. D. 1784,) as my legitimate and worthy *grandchildren*, and though quite too noisy and fanatical, yet I cannot but be quite partial to you, since, next to your mother, the Church of England, you possess nearly all my features; indeed, the *likeness* is striking and remarkable!"

3. Will Protestants charge the Church of Rome with being "mystical Babylon" and that "scarlet woman," drunken with the blood of the saints?

May not Rome reply, If I am BABYLON, because I have persecuted and shed the blood of the heretical Anabaptists, then do *you also belong to Babylon*, for which one of you all have not imbued your hands in their blood? *Your own garments* are scarlet and blood-dyed, as well as my own! It

becomes us to keep these *family matters* among ourselves, and not charge each other before our enemies.*

4. Will Protestants denounce Rome for the iniquitous and blasphemous assumptions of her clergy of the "divine right" to *legislate* for the Church of Christ, to make, change, or abolish, rites and ceremonies, &c.?

Do not Protestants claim the same ANTICHRISTIAN POWER? See Meth. Discipline, Art. 22. "Every particular church may *ordain*, *change*, or *abolish*, rites and ceremonies, so that all things be done to edification"—of whom? The rulers are the judges, of course; they, then, claim to ordain or institute, change and abolish, until they are themselves perfectly suited, pleased and satisfied! Is not this claiming *Antichristian powers*? Does the Pope claim more power?

CALVIN says, "From the beginning, the church has *freely* allowed herself, excepting the substance, to have rites a little *dissimilar*, for some immerse *thrice* and others only *once*;" and he therefore abolished immersion altogether, as inconvenient, and ordained sprinkling in the room of Christ's appointment. He had as good a right to have forbidden baptism entirely, as to change its action in the least. He did abolish *Christian* baptism and substituted *clerical* baptism instead of it.

5. Will Protestants protest against the unscriptural *orders* of the Catholic clergy, since Christ made all his ministers equal, and only one order? But the advocates of Episcopacy, whether Protestant or Methodist, have their three *orders* at least, and their *inferior* and *superior* ministers.

6. Will they protest against the irreligious practice of the

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* Read Rev. xviii., 24. "The blood of all the saints is to be found in Babylon." If Protestant sects have shed the blood of saints, are they not a part of mystical Babylon?

inferior *Catholic* clergy of being solemnly sworn to *obey* reverently in *all things* the superior clergy? The Methodist and Episcopal inferior clergy are compelled to do the same thing! See office for ordination of deacons and elders.

7. Will they charge the Catholics with blasphemy for giving the titles that belong to God to the pontiff, and cardinals and bishops? Are not Episcopalians and Methodists guilty of the same sin? See the title given to the late Bishop Hedding, in the Methodist preacher.* "THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD!" This smacks of my Lord God the Pope. See titles of the Episcopal clergy.

8. Will they object to the Pope because he claims the power of *the keys?* The Protestant clergy claim *each* the same power! Methodist bishops and elders claim it, and Presbyterian ministers and their elders!

9. Will Protestant sects attack the Catholics because they claim that the supreme *visible headship* is vested in the Pope of Rome, since the visible Church has no *earthly head?* But they have each a head! Queen Victoria and her parliament is the Head of the Church of England, as Pio Nono and his bench of cardinals is of the Catholic. The bishops and General Conference is the head of the Methodist society, and the General Assembly of Presbyterianism, *all legislative bodies.* I should prefer one great grand head to so many little heads!

10. Will Protestants object to popery on the ground of her *traditions?* They hold, teach, and practise her most pernicious one—that has done Christianity more injury than all the other traditions of popery together! Infant baptism is a *tradition* of "the Church" as well as *sprinkling* and *pouring upon* for baptism, and Catholics have never failed to cast it into the teeth of Protestants, that while they protest

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* Introduction, p. 6.

against the authority of the Romish Church, they practise one of her principal traditions.

What says Dr. Pise (a priest of the Romish Church, and of high standing among that order in New York, second, perhaps, to none but Bishop Hughes), in a lecture recently delivered in New York: "There are many things believed by all Christians at the present day, not to be found in the Scriptures. This is true with regard to infant baptism, that we and all Christians [pedobaptist] believe in, for there is no authority for it in Scripture. We nowhere find that the apostles baptized infants, and if it be proper and necessary to baptize infants as well as adults, we have no other authority and MUST DEPEND ENTIRELY ON TRADITION"—of the Church of Rome, of course.

11. Will they denounce popery for its opposition to the circulation of the *pure* word of God, so that every man may have *every* word of the "Word of Life" *faithfully translated* into his own language? Protestants, as sects, are bitterly opposed to the purest possible version in all languages and tongues, and indeed, to-day are giving a *pure version to no nation of earth!* Did they not refuse to circulate the version made by Dr. Judson, because it translated every word?

So of other versions.

12. IS NOT POPERY AN ABSOLUTE AND TYRANNICAL HIERARCHY, oppressive to humanity, hostile to its best interests, and in its influence opposed to, and destructive of all free institutions, as of civil and religious liberty? We have seen that the leading Protestant sects are hierarchies or despotic aristocracies also. It is a fixed fact, and easy of *clearest demonstration*, that *hierarchical* and *aristocratical* church organizations are hostile, in their influence, to republican institutions, that they insensibly prepare the rising generation to favor, if not to seek, a civil government of the *same charac-*

ter. It is admitted that nothing is more dangerous than a religious hierarchy or monarchy in a Republic. Is the Roman hierarchy dangerous, and are the *Protestant* hierarchies less so? It is the *principle*, not the *name*, for a hierarchy is subversive of religious freedom in whose hands soever it may be. The time is not far distant when Protestant hierarchies will be repudiated by all Christians, as the papal is to-day.

13. Will Protestants charge upon the Catholics that they recognize and support the adulterous union of Church and State, telling them that the Church of Christ "is not of this world?"

Rome could reply:—You, my daughters, have committed *harlotry* and made yourselves the "abominations of the earth" by the same act. Where have you had the power, and have not united the State to your churches? Have not Episcopalians done so in England, and all her colonies, and did they not retain the union in America so long as possible? Have not the Presbyterians in Scotland, and in all the continental kingdoms of Europe, as well as Lutherans, and did they not do the same thing in the American colonies? I could continue this table of identity of principles to double the number, did time allow; but these are sufficient for my purpose, to show that the reformation must be radically *reformed*, and Protestantism *itself protested* against, before it can successfully grapple with the papacy, or deserve to receive the countenance of republican-loving, American Christians. A *democratic religion* alone can become the religion of America, unless we, as a nation, are given up of God, and the existing republican element is to be overpowered by the tremendous counteracting effect of the huge overshadowing Papal and Protestant hierarchies, planted everywhere throughout the whole land, exerting, as such ever do, the greatest power where religion is most corrupted.

We also see the unfortunate antagonism with all the Protestant sects, into which we, as Baptists, are brought whenever we attack the *principles* of Papacy! Our blows break their force upon Protestants; and Catholic priests smile in security behind them, as behind a bulwark. We can only reach Romanists through Protestants, for they are entrenched behind them. Their priests the more securely keep them in darkness by directing their attention to the fact that Protestants hold and practise their traditions, and defend *nearly all their important principles!* It requires great moral courage and Christian heroism in Baptists to attack these principles, since they know they will be precipitated into a fierce conflict with all Protestant sects, and expose themselves to their displeasure, hatred, and often their bitter persecutions. This ought not so to be. We cannot believe that the Saviour ever intended *his* followers to be thus divided and conflicting. We believe there are many precious Christians in the Pedobaptist sects, *though in great error.* We have no bitterness, nothing but love in our heart towards them, and this leads us to pray for them, and endeavor to convince them of their error; to leave men and follow Christ. They should unite with *us* against the inrolling flood of Catholicism, if they love their country or the religion of Christ. And they cannot do this so long as they hold the distinctive principles of the *papacy* in common with Papists. We beseech them, for the sake of their land and religion, to repudiate these and unite with us upon the word of God, and let the *Bible, and the Bible alone, be our religion.* Let our principles be blazoned upon our banner.

A PURE BIBLE ONLY, OUR PRAYER-BOOK, CONFESSION, AND DISCIPLINE.

NO REGENERATION BUT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD OF GOD.

NO SALVATION BUT BY GRACE. OBSERVING ALL THINGS AND THOSE ONLY, WHICH CHRIST COMMANDED, AND AS HE COMMANDED.

I protest, I have not noticed the papal features of Protestantism but with the kindest feelings and the purest motives. These are the *weak points of Protestantism.* It is behind the age as well as unsupported by the Bible. The reformation needs another Luther. Were he once more to direct it, we have reason to believe that, with the light of this age, he would reform it of every feature of Romanism; he would effect the reformation he so ardently desired in his day, restore to it the primitive immersion of believers, and republicanize its government. Protestantism is chilled in the *shadow* of the 16th century. It has made no advancement. It is still either afraid to trust the people with self-government, or its clergy have become too corrupt to yield up the reins and sceptre of ecclesiastical domination. The 19th century has demonstrated the truth of God's word, that man is capable of, and created for, self-government, and that it is the only form of government that will secure for humanity, individually or nationally, in Church or State, the proper incentive to progress, the largest freedom, and the greatest happiness. Let Protestantism, then, bow to this fact, and grant to its membership the inalienable right which the Creator and Redeemer of man vouchsafed him, and which the Papal and Protestant clergy have so long and so iniquitously usurped and withheld.

The principle of hierarchism, in Papism or Protestantism, while it is opposed to republicanism, offers the greatest discouragement to original thought, free and unprejudiced investigation, unbiased and unrestrained action. It is also, like Papism, opposed to the Bible, and a *pure* Bible alone, being the *only* and *all-sufficient* rule of faith and practice, for

the masses. It adds a Prayer-Book, or a Confession of Faith, or Discipline—a human code of laws—to the divine and inspired *Discipline* and STATUTE-BOOK of the Kingdom of Jesus,—the New Testament.

But I propose to notice briefly, the unscripturalness of this Romish interpretation of the giving of the keys. It is evidently figurative, since the Saviour did not give literal keys to Peter.

The expression was doubtless used in allusion to the fact that the key was a badge of office, as steward of the house; or it may allude to the presentation of the key to the young doctor of the law. Martin says,—

"When the Jews made a man a *doctor* of the *law* they put into his hand the key of the closet in the temple, where the sacred books were kept, and tablets to write upon; signifying by this that they gave him authority to teach and to explain the Scriptures to the people."—*Quoted by A. Clark.*

"*Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth*," &c.

This was doubtless borrowed from a phraseology in common use at that time. In chapter xviii. 18, the authority *to bind* and *to loose* is committed to the *disciples.*

Dr. Clark says: "This mode of expression was frequent among the Jews; they considered that every thing that was done upon earth, *according to the order of God*, was at the same time done in heaven." "The *binding* and *loosing* were terms in frequent use among the Jews, and they meant *bidding* and *forbidding*, *granting* and *refusing*, declaring lawful and unlawful." He tells us that this mode of expression was used in two senses: first, in doctrine and in judgment, concerning *things* allowed and not allowed in the law; secondly, *to bind* is the same as to *forbid* or *declare to be forbidden.*

Dr. Lightfoot remarks: "When the time was come

wherein the *Mosaic* law, as to some part of it, was to be abolished and left off, and as to another part of it was to be continued and to last for ever, he granted *Peter*, here and to the rest of the apostles (chap. xv. iii. 8.) a power to *abolish* or *confirm* what they thought good, and as they thought good; being taught this and led by the Holy Spirit, as if he should say, "Whatsoever ye shall *bind* in the law of Moses, that is *forbid*, it shall be *forbidden*, the divine authority confirming it; and whatsoever ye shall *loose*, that is *permit* or shall teach, that is permitted and lawful, shall be lawful and permitted." Hence they *bound*, that is *forbade* circumcision to the believers; eating of things offered to idols, of things strangled and of blood, for a time, to the *Gentiles;* and that which they bound on earth *was confirmed in heaven.*" Many other things they *loosed* and *bound* by the same authority, the Holy Ghost leading and directing them.

Whatever this power was, it was entrusted to *the apostles alone*, and not to their successors in office, for they had none. For Protestants to claim that this passage warrants the doctrine of the divine right of the clergy to the *supreme* rule of the Church is claiming too much, for if this passage proves that the clergy are the successors of the apostles in such a sense that they are authorized to exercise their prerogative to bind and loose, then it proves too much for your clergy, for in John xx. 23, it is added, "Whose soever sins ye *remit*, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained."

Will you also claim for Methodist preachers the absolute and supreme power to *forgive sins* as well as the supreme power to govern the Church? You may as consistently. In whatever sense we understand remitting and retaining sins, or binding and loosing, those who exercise it needed the infallible direction of the Holy Spirit. Hence Jesus, on

conferring the authority, breathed on them, and said, Receive the Holy Ghost, v. 22.

The power of the keys, as exercised by the apostles, doubtless ceased with them. During their ministry all the instructions and laws Christ intended for his churches were sufficiently unfolded and explained for the observance of his followers. He clothed the apostles with this authority that we might receive their words as of equal authority with his own, since they taught and spake only as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

But instead of the Scriptures warranting the lofty claims of your ministers to rule the Church, they rebuke them, and show that they partake of the spirit of Antichrist. Paul gave it as one of the unmistakable features of the man of sin, that he *as* "God," *i. e.*, with *supreme* authority—"sitteth in the temple"—house or *Church*—"of God, showing himself that he is God;" *i. e.*, usurping the place and claiming the prerogatives of God. Christ taught that *he* was the "head," the "husband," the sole "lawgiver of his Church;" but alas! Catholic Popes and Protestant Ministers all have usurped his place, and exercise his authority over his Church—if their *semi-papal* societies can be regarded as his churches.

LETTER XXIII.

The influence of power and rank upon Ministers of the Gospel is pernicious—Promotes ambition, &c.

Sir:—This series of letters would be essentially incomplete if I failed to call your attention especially to the pernicious *influence of power and rank upon ministers of the gospel.* This, therefore, will be the theme of my present communication. I need not inform you that ministers are men "of like passions" and infirmities with other men. They are compared to vessels, but they are said to be "*earthen* vessels." Alas! that there is so much about them to remind others as well as themselves that they "are of the earth, earthy." I think, sir, if you will faithfully examine Matthew 23: 8–12, you will be convinced that Jesus Christ inculcated the doctrine of *ministerial parity.* He had condemned the vanity and ambition of the Scribes and Pharisees, who loved the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

The great Teacher said to his disciples, "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted."

Defective indeed must be the mental and moral vision of the man who does not see that the Lord Jesus, in these verses, intended to suppress ministerial ambition and promote a feeling of ministerial equality. "All ye are brethren." "One is your Master, even Christ." This is equivalent to the expressions, "Ye are all equal;"—"You have no Master but Christ."

Do you not, sir, agree with me in saying that it would have been most fortunate for the interests of Christianity if these teachings of Christ had been practically remembered from the days of the apostles till now? How different would then have been the records of Church history! How many occurrences which should tinge the cheek of Christendom with shame would never have taken place!—How much blood would never have been shed, and how many martyr fires would never have been kindled! Then there would have been no disgraceful contests about "Peter's keys." Rome would never have had a Pope, nor the Greek Church a Patriarch. The archbishops of Canterbury and York would never have been heard of, and the term bishop, in its Methodist acceptation, would never have been applied to J. Soule. In how many instances has a forgetfulness of the teachings of Christ operated perniciously!

But I come directly to the subject of this letter—*the influence of power and rank upon ministers.* You cannot deny that the "Discipline" gives great power to Methodist preachers. From the time they "join Conference" they begin to exercise this power. "Circuit-riders," who are sometimes referred to as "beardless boys," claim an authority which ought to satisfy the ambition of a Romish priest. Your friend Dr. Henkle insists that preachers have the right to receive members into the Methodist Church. True, he admits that they may take the laity into "advisory coöperation,"

but utterly repudiates the idea that the laity should have any "authoritative control" in the matter. He denies, indeed, that the right on the part of the preachers to receive members implies (as he admits some had contended) also the right to expel them. Both these *rights* (!), I suppose, are often exercised by your preachers. If you say the Discipline does not confer them, then it follows that Methodist preachers have such a thirst for power that they are not satisfied with the exuberant authority conferred by the Discipline. There is a love of power natural to man, and permit me to say that Methodistic regulations must cultivate and promote that love of power in your preachers. How can it be otherwise, while they are men, and not angels? I know the Methodist doctrine of perfection may be referred to, but you, sir, must admit that the exemplifications of this doctrine, like angel-visits, are "few and far between." The love of power in a circuit-rider or stationed preacher excites aspirations after the larger power incident to a presiding eldership, while the possession of the latter power invests the office of bishop with strong attractions. What elder does not have day-dreams of the glory attendant on the exercise of Episcopal authority? That glory is regarded as the greatest distinction known to Methodism. To be a bishop in the Methodist sense of the term is considered an unspeakably higher honor than to be a bishop in the scriptural acceptation of the word.

It seems to me, sir, that the influence of power and rank upon Methodist preachers must be decidedly bad. The power and the rank go together. An advance in rank is an increase of power. Every step taken from membership in Conference to a bishop's seat augments ministerial authority, and unites by stronger ties what Reverdy Johnson termed the "clerical aristocracy." How frequently, too, is arrogance

an accompaniment of power! And who has not been disgusted with the arrogance of Methodist preachers? Who has not scornfully smiled at witnessing the airs assumed by circuit-riders? Presiding elders often manifest a haughty disposition, though they have prudence to conceal many things which a circuit-rider makes public. Bishops may be expected to exercise greater discretion than elders, though the power they possess is, in this free country, appalling. A bishop may say to one of the inferior clergy, "Go, and he goeth," and to another, "Come, and he cometh." He tells the elders over what districts of country they shall preside. He stations what preachers he pleases, and puts on the "circuit" those he thinks best fitted for the business of "*riding*." It may be said that some of the Methodist bishops are very humble men. Probably so; and some of the archbishops of England have been comparatively humble, and also some of the Popes of Rome. *Still, it is a great mystery how humble men can occupy these positions!!* However, so far as Methodist bishops are concerned, the *twenty-second* of their "Articles of Religion" may afford them relief. If I understand that article it teaches that what is "not repugnant to the word of God," provided it is "ordained and approved by common authority," becomes obligatory. You may, for aught I know, persuade yourself that the office which you fill in the Methodist Episcopal Church South is "not repugnant to the word of God," &c., and that, therefore, it is not inconsistent with the character of a minister of Christ to accept the official position you occupy. The principle, however, is a dangerous one, and as absurd as dangerous. Look at it. A reader of the New Testament would never draw the inference from its teachings that it is a bishop's duty to preside over a large territory, having under him the inferior clergy, &c. No; the conclusion would be that a bishop is identical

with a pastor. Very well. It accords with the word of God then, for a bishop to superintend a congregation, and labor for its spiritual improvement. Indeed, where the size of a church demanded it, there was doubtless, in apostolic times, a plurality of bishops. Hence Paul, in taking leave of the Ephesian elders, calls them *overseers* (*episcopous* in the original) and writes to the saints at Philippi with the "*bishops* and deacons." A church therefore might have more than one bishop; but for one bishop to preside over a hundred or a thousand churches, was a thing unknown to the inspired apostles of Christ. Do you say, "It is not repugnant to the word of God?" This is like the argument for infant baptism. How often has it been contended that it is not, in so many words, forbidden; and on this account it is not wrong to practise it? You know, sir, that the Baptist reasoning is, that the commission of Christ enjoining the baptism of believers virtually prohibits the baptism of infants. And so the New Testament references to bishops are such as to preclude the idea that they at all resemble Episcopalian or Methodist bishops. If I have given a correct account of the office of bishop, according to the teachings of the Scriptures, it follows that the official station you occupy is "repugnant to the word of God." It comes directly in conflict with it. It practically falsifies the word of God. I ask you, sir, if this is not alarming? Here is the highest office in the realms of Methodism—the office of bishop—to which hundreds of thousands of the laity look as the highest earthly distinction, inaccessible, indeed, to them, and to which thousands of preachers turn their aspiring eyes, and hope that it is among the unknown possibilities of the future that they will be bishops of the Methodist Church! And yet, sir, the New Testament no more authorizes this office than it does the establishment of a telegraphic connection between the moon

and the planet Jupiter. All this anxiety is about an office which the word of God does not sanction. And to what intriguing and electioneering has this anxiety led! But I forbear.

There is another respect in which power and rank among your preachers must have a bad influence. I allude to the fact that they are irresponsible to the people. They rule over the people, and, being clothed with authority, they do many things they ought not to do. But are they accountable to the people? No. Who appoint the class-leaders? The preachers. Who can remove the class-leaders at pleasure? The preachers. Who nominate the stewards? The preachers. Who compose the Quarterly Conference? The preachers and their appointees and nominees. Who compose the Annual Conferences? Preachers alone. Who compose the General Conferences? Preachers. This looks very much like a ministerial aristocracy. Let a preacher be guilty of conduct inconsistent with the Christian profession, and who is to try him? Preachers. The laity have nothing to do in the matter. Your lay members have my profoundest sympathies, Bishop Soule. Your system reduces them almost to ciphers. I wonder that men who have American hearts in their bosoms can submit to it.

I ask you if their irresponsibility to the people does not have a bad influence on your preachers? Does it not puff them up with pride and arrogance? Does it not make them tyrannical? Have you seen no indications of this sort? What kind of civil rulers do you think we would have, if they were released from all responsibility to the people? I know John Wesley abhorred republicanism; but I ask you how you would like a civil tyranny in this country? Can you not say with one of the fathers of the Revolution, "Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God." If you can, in reference to civil rulers, how can you tolerate, and in your

official position even exemplify, an ecclesiastical despotism, the most oppressive known to Protestant Christendom? You are aware, sir, that the Presbyterians and Episcopalians are less tyrannical in their forms of government than the Methodists. Go into a Presbytery, Synod, or General Assembly, and you will find laymen as well as clergymen. In an Episcopal Convention there are lay as well as clerical delegates. In a Methodist Annual or General Conference, however, not a layman is to be found. The voices of the clergy alone are heard. The three departments of your government—legislative, judicial and executive—are in the hands of the preachers. And what did the celebrated Bascom say of this state of things? Here is his language, taken from his "Declaration of Rights:"

"A government uniting the legislative, judicial, and executive powers in the hands of the same men, is an absurdity in theory, and in practice, tyranny. * * * * In a government, civil or ecclesiastical, where the same men are legislators, administrators, and judges, in relation to all the laws, and every possible application of them, the people, whether well or ill treated, are in fact slaves; for the only remedy against such despotism is revolt."

This is strong language, but no stronger than true. If Dr. Bascom lived and died in a Church whose government he considered a "despotism," I do not know that it is my duty to account for it. Protestant Methodists have intimated that he probably had assurances that distinguished honors would be conferred on him if he would remain where he was. If such assurances were given and proved influential, we have another proof of the weakness of human nature, and of the mischievous effect produced by power and rank upon preachers of the gospel.

Look into Church history, sir, and you will see the inci

pient developments of the spirit which generated the Papacy. First there was an infringement upon the rights of the laity —then ambitious, power-loving clergymen trespassed on the rights of their equals in the ministry—city preachers were looked up to as superior to those in the towns and country; and thus things went on, step by step, until Rome claimed the "Universal Bishop," and Popery stood forth in its repulsive atrocity. Ministerial ambition led to Popery, and the Methodist form of government cherishes ministerial ambition.*

The following sensible article recently appeared in the Boston *Olive Branch*, a Protestant-Methodist paper; and it being from the pen of one who has had extensive experience in Methodism, I with pleasure add it as corroborative testimony:

"INFLUENCE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPACY UPON THE MINISTRY.

"MR. EDITOR:—It is nearly twelve years since I became extensively acquainted with the ministry of the Methodist E. Church in New-England; and during that period of time I have closely watched the influence of her Church government upon the ministry itself. That the influence is bad, is by no means problematical to every unprejudiced mind. That it destroys that manly independence which should characterize every ambassador of Christ, is too obvious to admit of a doubt. The ministry generally, instead of acting like *free men*, is trammelled and biased by the influence of bishops and presiding elders. The itinerant ministry feel bound to carry out every feature of the system which is recommended by those who "lord it over God's heritage," whether it

* This was written by Eld. J. M. Pendleton, of Ky., at our request

be in accordance with the spirit of Christianity or not. Comparatively few, save those who are acknowledged to be the "prime ministers" in the Methodist E. Church, can, in the emphatic sense of the word, be termed freemen. So much succumbing cannot be found in any other ministry as in that of the Methodist E. Church; and the grand secret why the ministry is in so much bondage, is because she is so entirely dependent upon bishops and presiding elders for her support. If an itinerant preacher should fail to carry out into practical effect all the dogmas of presiding elders, proscription would be the order of the day; and that minister who dares to go contrary to the given advice of his superiors in office would be marked and remembered in the cabinet, and have to suffer himself with his innocent and unoffending family, the first opportunity the offended presiding elder has to exercise his proscriptive influence. There are too many painful instances on record to prove that the spirit of proscription is carried out, to admit of doubt for one moment on this point. Witness the case of Rev. J. D. Bridge, removed from Springfield to Duxbury. The itinerant ministry is generally exposed to any and every injury that the bishops and presiding elders may choose to inflict; and not a few feel, too, the power a bishop can wield every opportunity he chooses. The itinerant ministry are suffering from ecclesiastical despotism every year, more or less; and those who are brought to feel severely the rod of oppression, if they speak out and tell the truth on the subject, or seek for an asylum anywhere else, are not saved, even then, from the "powers that be." Every possible influence is used to destroy their ministerial and Christian characters; and to no small extent is their usefulness curtailed. And many who have left the Methodist E. Church from disaffection, have, from the influence that has been exerted against

them, been compelled to retire from the duties of the Christian ministry, and enter into secular concerns; and the benefits that might otherwise have been realized in the world, have been lost."

LETTER XXIV.

THE EPISCOPACY AND THE PEOPLE.

DEDICATED TO AMERICAN METHODISTS.

The Principles of legitimate Governments—Man's inalienable Rights—They cannot be conceded or alienated without Sin—They cannot be usurped without Impiety—What is a Tyranny and a Despotism, according to Bishop Bascom?—Methodism proven to be a Tyranny, a clerical Despotism, Anti-American in its Genius and Tendency—Republicanism backwards—A New Definition of Methodism, and an Illustration.

"It is true to a great extent, that throughout all divisions of the Christian world, intellect has taken but comparatively little hold of the subject of religion, and still less of the subject of Church government; and this affords the ministry an opportunity of misleading the people."—*Bascom.*

"A government uniting the legislative, judicial, and executive powers in the hands of the *same men*, is an *absurdity* in theory, and in practice TYRANNY."—*Ibid.*

DEAR SIR:—Having noticed the influence of Episcopacy of ministerial rank and power upon the Methodist ministry, I propose to notice briefly how this Great Iron Wheel power works down upon the people—how unmitigated its tyranny, and how presumptuous in the usurpation of their rights as men and Christians—rights that cannot be conceded or alienated witnout sin, or usurped without impiety.

I hold it to be a self-evident truth, that all men were created free and equal. Our Creator endowed us with the

power, and guaranteed unto us, by the charter of our creation, the right of *self-government*, restricted by no statutes save those imposed directly by himself; ay, more, he made it our duty to preserve this right, and has made its surrender or concession an injury inflicted upon our minds, our progress, and our happiness, as it is insulting to himself.

I assert it as an axiom, that it is man's duty to be free. and exercise his right of self-government, in all nations and under all circumstances, in both Church and State. The Gospel of Christ sustains and vindicates to man these inalienable rights; and, therefore, wherever it fully pervades his soul, it makes him everywhere a republican, as well as a Christian. Humanity, wherever oppressed, robbed, and degraded by the pride, and rapacity, and venality of tyrants and usurpers, called kings and emperors, has a right to free itself of its oppressors, and rise to the dignity, and assert the rights of man. I find these principles stated in Bascom's famous "Declaration of the Rights of Man," from which I shall quote largely in the present letter.

"ART. 1. God, as the common Father of mankind, has created all men free and equal, and the proper equality and social freedom of the great brotherhood of the human race, in view of the gifts and grants of the Creator, are to be inferred from all his dispensations to men. Every man, by the charter of his creation, is the equal of his contemporaries —the essential rights of every generation are the same. Man, as the child of God's creation, continues man immutably, under all circumstances; and the rights of ancestry are those of posterity. Man has claims which it becomes his duty to assert, in right of his existence, such as the indefeasible right of thinking and acting for himself, when thought and action do not infringe the right of another, as they never will, when truth and justice are made the basis of human intercourse.

These rights, common to the great family of man, cannot be abolished by concession, statute, precedent, or positive institution; and when wrested or withheld from the multitude of mankind by their rulers, may be reclaimed by the people, whenever they see proper to do it."

Man, then, was created a sovereign. The people are, and of right ought to be, sovereigns. They cannot with impunity surrender their natural rights. No legitimate civil government can call upon them to do so. God is the author of no government, civil or ecclesiastical, that denies to man the estimable and ennobling gifts of his Creator. In becoming a member of civil society, the exercise of his rights may be slightly modified, but they should not, cannot, without injury both to himself and to the government, be relinquished. His sovereignty must be recognized, and his rights exercised, or he becomes mentally imbecilitated and degraded, and the government speedily vitiated and a curse.

For example: While it is the right of the American people to enact directly every law, and give an expression upon every public measure connected with the administration of this government, they may, to facilitate the legislation of the country, modify the *exercise* of this right, and elect representatives to enact the requisite laws, and devise the proper measures, subject, however, to be amended or abolished by other representatives, in case they are not approbated by the people. The great principle is in this case preserved, that the voice of the people is the source of all power; their representatives and executive are but the servants of the people. The power works outward and upward from the people; the supreme power is in their voice. That government in which this power is in the hands of a few—of a particular class, as the preachers, not elected by the people, and not amenable to them, is a "tyranny in one of its most dan

gerous forms." We quote from Bishop Bascom's work, above alluded to :—

"ART. 2. Man was created for society; his natural rights are adapted to the social state, and under every form of society, constitute properly the foundation of his civil rights When man becomes a member of civil society, he submits to a modification of some of his natural rights, but he never does, he never can, relinquish them. He concedes the exercise of these rights, for his own and the general good, but does not, cannot cast them off. His rights receive a new direction, but do not terminate; and that government which deprives man of rights, justly claimed in virtue of his creation, and interwoven with the constitution of his nature and the interests of society, denies to him the gifts of his Creator, and must be unjust. God can be the author of no government, contravening the wisdom of his arrangements in the creation of men.

"ART. 3. In every community there is a power which receives the denomination of sovereignty—a power not subject to control, and that controls all subordinate powers in the government. Now, whether this power be in the hands of the many or a few, it is indubitably certain, that those members only of the community are free, in whom the sovereign power resides. The power of a community is essential to its freedom, and if this power be confined to a few, freedom is necessarily confined to the same number. All just government must be founded upon the nature of man, and should consult alike the natural rights, civil wants, and moral interests of his being. All rightful authority is founded in power and law; all just power is founded in right, and as one man's natural right to the character of lawgiver is, to all intents, as good as another's, it follows, that all legitimate law must have its origin in the expressed will of the many

"ART. 1. As all men are essentially equal, in their rights, wants, and interests, it follows from these, that representative government is the only legitimate human rule to which any people can submit. It is the only kind of government that can possibly reconcile, in any consistent way, the claims of authority with the advantages of liberty. A prescriptive legislative body, making laws without the knowledge or consent of the people to be governed by them, is a despotism. Legislators without constituents, or peers and fellows deputing them as their representatives and actors—thus constituting themselves a legislature beyond the control of the people—is an exhibition of tyranny in one of its most dangerous forms. In the momentous affairs of government, nothing should be made the exclusive property of a few which by right belongs to all, and may be safely and advantageously used by the rightful proprietors. The justice of every government depends essentially upon the original consent of the people; this privilege belongs to every community, in the right of the law of nature; and no man or multitude of men can alter, limit, or diminish it. Constitutional law is an expression of the will of the people, and their concurrence in its formation, either personally or by representation, is essential to its legitimate authority."

Every just or legitimate government is founded upon, and restricted and controlled by, a constitution created or adopted by the people, and in that instrument the sovereign rights of the people are distinctly recognized and called into exercise. In civil governments, the constitution is the act of the people asserting their natural rights, and securing themselves against the chances of maladministration. All republican governments are based upon constitutions; absolute governments, tyrannies, and despotisms have none; for, says Bascom,—

"ART. 5. No community can be said, without mockery, to have a constitution, where there is a consolidation of the different powers of government in the hands of the same men, and the remaining portion are left, of course, without any security for their rights. Such a case presents an absolute government; a government of men, not principles. A constitution is not the creature of government; the nature of things renders it impossible that it should be an act of government. In strict propriety, it exists anterior to government;—government is based upon, proceeds from, and is the creature of, the constitution. A constitution contains the elements and principles of government, and fixes the nature and limits of its form and operations, but is an instrument distinct from government, and by which government is controlled. It is a preliminary act of the people, in the creation of government. It sustains to government the same relation that laws do to the judiciary; the latter is not the source of law, cannot make laws or annul them, but is subject to and governed by law. A constitution recognizes the rights of the people, and provides for their assertion and maintenance. It settles the principles and maxims of gov ernment. It fixes the landmarks of legislation. It is the sovereign voice of the people, giving law and limit to themselves and their representatives.

"ART. 6. A government uniting the legislative, judicial, and executive powers in the hands of the same men, is an absurdity in theory, and in practice, tyranny. The executive power, in every government, should be subordinate to the legislative, and the judicial independent of both. Whenever, therefore, it happens that these three departments of government are in the hands of the same body of men, and these men not the representatives of the people—first making the laws, then executing them, and finally the sole judges

of their own acts, there is no liberty; the people are virtually enslaved, and liable to be ruined at any time. In a government, civil or ecclesiastical, where the same men are legislators, administrators, and judges, in relation to all the laws, and every possible application of them, the people, whether well or ill treated, are in fact slaves; for the only remedy against such a despotism is revolt. No constitution can be presumed a good one, embodying the principles of correct government, which does not sufficiently guard against the chances and possibility of maladministration. All absolute governments owe their character to the manner in which they are administered, whereas, in a representative government, with proper checks and balances, it is the interest, even of the vicious, to promote the general welfare, by conforming to the laws. The greater the equality established among men by governments, the more virtue and happiness will prevail; for where the voluntary consent of the governed is the basis of government, interest and duty combine to promote the common weal."

In all the churches of Christ, which are governments, the New Testament is the constitution, containing all the principles upon which governments are to be based, and its laws and discipline administered. And since the constitution determines the form and character of the government based upon it, therefore the New Testament must, with sufficient clearness, determine the form of government Christ intended for his churches. In that sacred constitution, the Christian's and humanity's "Magna Charta," all man's inalienable rights as a man and a Christian are asserted and vindicated to him, and the most terrible woes thundered upon the ears of all Rabbis and masters who may presume to enslave them.

"ART. 9. The New Testament furnishes the principles,

but not the forms of Church government; and in the adaptation of forms to these principles, Christian bodies should be governed mainly by the few facts and precedents furnished in the apostolic writings. The will and mind of the Great Head of the Church on this subject, so far as clearly revealed, whether by express statute or fair implication, cannot be contravened without impiety; but in relation to a variety of topics connected with the internal police and external relations of the Church, on which the Scriptures are silent, it is left to every Christian community to adopt its own regulations, and the same is true of nations. Ministers and private Christians, according to the New Testament, are entitled to equal rights and privileges—an identity of interests implies an equality of rights. A monopoly of power, therefore, by the ministry, is a usurpation of the rights of the people. No power on the part of the ministry can deprive the people legitimately of their elective and representative rights; as the ministry cannot think and act for the people in matters of principle and conviction, so neither can they legislate for them, except as their authorized representatives.

"ART. 10. The government of every Christian Church should be strictly a government of principle, in relation to the governed; and every private Christian is as deeply and reasonably interested as the ministry. Dominion over conscience is the most absurd of all human pretentions. The assumption that absolute power in the affairs of Church government is a sacred deposit in the hands of the ministry libels the genius and charities of the New Testament."

Christ most energetically forbade his disciples the right to surrender or to concede the exercise of the right to have an equal voice in the administration of the government and dis-

cipline of his Church. He distinctly and imperiously commanded them neither to submit to or acknowledge authoritative rulers, for such were the Jewish Rabbis, and masters, and teachers, though they were their own ministers, who should seek to usurp their rights. To yield the government of Christ's Church into the hands of such, is, therefore, a sin against the blessed Saviour; for it is a direct and open violation of his express command. It is a matter, then, of VAST MOMENT what form of Church government we recognize and support—of as great moment as sin against Christ. The man who wilfully or willingly violates this injunction of the Saviour, sins as heinously as he who blasphemes his name. It is a solemn and weighty matter to decide what form of Church government we will recognize and support. And it is a sin of no common turpitude for professed ministers to usurp the rights of Christ's children, and assert absolute jurisdiction in the affairs of Church government, exercising supreme legislative, judicial, and executive powers; and thus converting the churches of Christ into seats of power and corruption, and unmitigated tyrannies, for their own aggrandizement, oppressing his children by thus daring to exercise authority and lordship over them. The King of Zion, who will terribly judge the impious usurpers of his throne, thus solemnly warns them:

"Neither be ye called masters, for one is yours, and all ye are brethren" (therefore only the equals of each other and your brethren).

"Ye know they that are accounted [appointed] to rule over the Gentiles, *exercise lordship over them*, and their great ones *exercise authority upon them.* But *so* it shall not be among you." Is not this authoritatively explicit? Did Christ intend that there should be a class of authoritative rulers of "great ones" in his Church, to exercise lordship

over, and authority upon, his disciples—chief ministers to dictate to and govern inferior ones—bishops having power to say to hundreds and thousands of Christ's ministers, go when and where they please—and they must go, or be cast out of the Church—and to come at their sovereign beck and call? Did not Christ positively forbid it? Is it not an open and insulting violation of the Saviour's express command? I am but an humble disciple of the blessed Saviour; but, if I know my own heart, I love him—love his honor, love his cause and kingdom; and I beg of you to beware that you do not violate this solemn injunction. Do you say," We bishops and presiding elders are the benefactors of our people, because we take all concern for the government off their hands and minds, and leave them nothing to do but to *pray* and to *give* their money? and we are the benefactors of the world, because we send our ministers to preach to it?" Then, hear the Saviour—" The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority are called benefactors; but *ye* shall not be so."

In view of these and other explicit commands of Christ, I am forced to conclude, with your own Bascom, that to assert and teach that such dangerous prerogatives are guaranteed to a privileged class, as ministers in the Church of Christ, is to " libel the genius and charities of the New Testament;" and that it is impiety in Christians to concede such prerogatives to their ministers, as it is for ministers to usurp and exercise them; for,

" Art. 10. Whenever a Christian people place themselves under a ministry who claim the right of thinking and deciding for them in matters of faith and morality, they are guilty of impiety, however unintentional, to the great Head of the Church, inasmuch as it is required of every Christian to reflect and determine for himself, in all cases, and the duty

cannot be performed by another. And those ministers who aim at a principality of this kind, in the personal concerns of faith and practice, are plainly guilty of usurped dominion over the rights and consciences of the people."

I ask not your people now if they be Americans, if they be freemen; but if they be *Christians*, if they love or fear the Saviour, how dare they reject Christ as their only master, and recognize and support your unscriptural jurisdiction over them? And I most fervently pray God that they may be brought to reflect upon this matter.

The principles of your system, developed above, lay at the threshold of my opposition to Methodism, driving as they do directly against the supreme authority of Christ over his Church, and violating his express and solemn commands.

But there are numerous specifications involved in, and positive evils growing out of, the workings of the system.

And 1st, *Methodism is degrading to your people.* You train them from the first day of their probation to submit to the absolute dictation of Methodist preachers in all religious matters, to believe what they bid them, *i. e.*, every thing contained in the Discipline—and to do what they bid them to do—and almost to think their thoughts.

Every process through which the subject passes, and the whole economy under which he is kept, and by which he is *turned* into one of Mr. Cookman's spindles, to be turned around every day by the class-leader, are degrading to the man. The people are deprived of the exercise of thought and deliberation, and concern and responsibility in matters of Church government, while to their faith, their thought and conscience, the Book of Discipline is as the Procustian bed—and to its exact dimensions they must contract or be stretched. This pledge is exacted from the members at the threshold. See Discipline, Part I., Sec. 2.

All absolute governments of this character, ever have, everywhere do, and always must, degrade, enervate and imbecilitate their subjects. Of this feature Dr. Bascom clearly says:—

"It should not be overlooked, moreover, that when the ministry are considered by the laity as the sole judges and depositories of faith and discipline, the people lose the only powerful motive, the only direct incentive, they can possibly have to inquire and decide for themselves, in the infinitely momentous concerns of truth and duty. Such a monopoly of power by the ministry tends directly to mental debasement, consequent indecision of character, insincerity, and misguided zeal.

"ART. 15. Government, as a fixed and stable cause in the progress of human affairs, is finally productive of a large amount of good or evil; it is strictly, in its operation, a moral cause, in the formation of character; for it necessarily presents circumstances and considerations, in the light of reasons and motives, which lead to results in the formation of character, that become habitual and permanent. The good of all concerned, therefore, should be the object proposed in the adoption of any form of government; and when a system of government is adopted which calls off the attention of the governed from the general welfare, by depriving them of all control in the enactment and execution of the laws, *the natural and unavoidable tendency of a government of this description, is vicious and demoralizing; and such are the character and influence of all non-elective governments.* The members of a community who place themselves under the exclusive control of a few irresponsible persons as their sole masters in matters of government, thus tamely depriving themselves of the right of representation, and even of existence, except by expatriation, betray a criminal

negligence of their best interests, and great inattention to the general welfare; and all governments recognizing such a distinction, contravene necessarily the influence of enlightened conviction and independent inquiry."

You deny to man the greatest boon of freedom—liberty of thought, of speech, and the press, which is his right by creation, by regeneration, and by the charter of American freemen. You bind him to your Book of Discipline, and then put him in connection with the wheel power. If he thinks differently from that book—if he objects to any one of its teachings—if he discover the effects of the wheel movement to be pernicious, "to grind him tremendously," and deprecates it to his friends around his own fireside, or if he protests against it and seeks to rectify it, he violates his vow—he has infracted one of the capital laws of the realm, and is obnoxious to discipline, and if he repents not, to *exclusion* and disgrace, if not ruin.

He may cordially adopt the doctrine of justification by *faith* only, without works, as set forth in Article IX., which precludes the possibility of the idea of the ultimate apostacy and ruin of a true believer. I say he may cordially receive this doctrine as set forth in your articles, and yet, as cordially abominate and repudiate the construction which you and your ministers put upon this article, and which passes for current Methodism, *i. e.*, that a true believer may fall from the grace of regeneration and be re-regenerated and fall again and again, and be as often regenerated over, or fall and be lost for ever. Should he do so, and should he speak his thoughts, (for of what practical utility to me or the world are my thoughts unless I can speak or write them?)—if he gives utterence to his dissent publicly or privately, and if it reaches the ears of the informers the class leaders, or of the minister in charge. he is at once arraigned for inveighing

against the doctrines and discipline of the Church, and if he does not confess his *sin* (?) in thus exercising his inalienable right as a man and a Christian, and promise implicit submission and silence in future, he must be cast forth as unworthy of a lot among Methodists—stained in character, and injured in business. Here is the law that virtually forbids freedom of speech: "If any member of our Church shall be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissensions in any of our societies by inveighing against [*i. e.*, dissenting from and speaking against] either our doctrines or discipline, such person so offending shall be first reproved by the senior minister or preacher of his circuit, and if he persists in such pernicious practices, he shall be expelled from the Church." He may have violated no command of Christ; indeed, may have spoken according to the sacred oracles in all he said; yet, if contrary to the Bible of Methodism, the Book of Discipline, he must be cast headlong out of the Church of Christ (if Methodism be a Church of Christ and not simply Mr. Wesley's scheme, as Methodist writers frankly admit, and Baptists generally believe). Is a Methodist then allowed to think freely, to speak his thoughts fearlessly, to investigate, to discuss, to write, unless all his thoughts and words square with the "clerical measure?" But where can he print his thoughts? The Methodist press is in the hands of the travelling ministers; they and they *only* are allowed to edit or control it. Should they print elsewhere, they are amenable to their masters for every sentence, as are the preachers to their "chief ministers."

See the law: "Any travelling preacher who may publish any work or book of his own, shall be responsible to his Conference for any *obnoxious matter or doctrine* therein contained."—Dis. p. iii, chap. vi. § 21.

Who judge what may be considered "obnoxious matter or doctrine?" His chief ministers; and their decision is ab-

solute. If a member is the offender who is judge of what is to be considered obnoxious? The ministers, or whom they may see fit to appoint. Here is the *crushing* power of the wheel. Who can tell what may be considered obnoxious to the judges? This principle is grossly anti-American, and is the essence of despotism.

Compare the above law of Methodism with the following in the Declaration of Rights adopted by our Continental Congress:

"Declaration of Rights.—*Resolved*, That the people have a right peaceably to assemble, consider of their grievances, and petition the king; and that all prosecutions, prohibitory proclamations, and commitments for the same are illegal."

You deny the people the liberty of the press. How do the despots of Rome, of France, of Austria, of Russia, control the press so that not one word shall appear that is not favorable to the iniquitious powers of the throne, and iniquitous administration of those powers? By a law similar to that adopted by the rulers of Methodism. Every editor in the realm is either appointed by the throne, or every man who writes, and every editor who publishes, matter that is deemed obnoxious to the censors appointed by the ruling powers, is liable to rigorous punishment. What is the result in these countries? what must be the result in any country under such a suppression of speech and the press? A gagged press —degradation of mind, of man—oppression—slavery! Can it be less so in the kingdom of Methodism? Do not the bishops assume to themselves the appointment of every editor of the whole realm? And therefcre every Methodist paper is a court journal. Do you not deny the eligibility of a layman—of a private member, to the office of editor of any one of all your papers? You do. I assert what

every intelligent man may know, that freedom of thought, of speech, and the press, is not more stringently and thoroughly suppressed in the empire of the Pope, or the Czar, than in the dominions of Episcopal Methodism. A late spirited writer justly says:

"*Episcopal Methodism is anti-American in its direct tendency to suppress freedom of speech and of the press.* That this is its tendency, no one acquainted with the system can consistently deny. Let a number of members of an Episcopal Methodist society express their conviction that the government of their Church might be bettered; let them print their views and circulate their opinions and *excommunication* is the penalty at once, either for orally discussing the matter, or printing their views. Suppose the press was under the control of Episcopal Methodism, it could not utter a sentiment at variance with the "Discipline" without being placed under interdict. A Methodist preacher cannot—*dare* not publish a book that shall encourage free inquiry into Episcopacy, or that will induce discussion of its merits, without the fear of *exclusion.* Now, how does *Rome* prevent the freedom of the press where she has not political power? By this bugbear of excommunication. Place the free press of America under the control of Methodist Episcopal bishops, and there could be no free discussion—Republicanism would be strangled, and the car of Liberty rolled backward. The Methodist Episcopal press now is under the control of the bishops—the editors of all the papers, magazines, books, tracts, etc., etc., are appointed by the Conference, with the approbation of the presiding bishop.

"If I am an American I must forget it in becoming an Episcopal Methodist. If I love republicanism, I must not express my preference for it in the government of the Church of which I am a member. Freedom of speech is denied

me on pain of *exclusion.* To speak of republicanism in Church government is to "sow dissension," and *that* is to be punished with *excommunication.* Americanism encourages freedom of speech; Episcopal Methodism suppresses it: it is, therefore, anti-American."

But I love the burning thoughts of your own Bascom. I have said that the withholding of these inalienable rights of freedom, and which it is the imperative duty that Christianity enjoins upon all men to exercise, tends to degrade the people.

"Where all the power and forms of government are held and managed by a few, who act without delegated right by consent of the people, the authority of the rulers is absolute, and the people are disfranchised of all right in the various relations existing between them as subjects and those who hold the reins of government. Such a government must always lead to mental debility, will depress the moral vigor of a people, and necessarily abridge the liberty of reasoning and investigation."

Methodism is not a school of republicanism, in which the children of this generation are taught and trained to be the republicans of the next, and inflamed with all the glorious sentiments of freeborn and Christ-born republicans, as the Church of Christ is—but it is teaching the sons of the people that it is right and duty to concede those rights in the Church to their ministers, and consent tamely and servilely to be taxed and ruled without the privilege of representation. It is therefore moulding the character of American children into monarchists—into concessionists and submissionists to tyrants—into believers in the divine right of kings, and ministers, and bishops! It is preparing them to be ruled by a king. It was a favorite aphorism with James I., "No bishop, no king." No episcopacy, no throne. Episcopacy is the right arm, the

handmaid of monarchy. It was designed to mould the people to take and wear the yoke of monarchy. Well might the persecuting Laud say, "If these Anabaptists succeed in plucking down the throne of the bishops, the thrones of kings will fall with them." Does not government insensibly mould the character of the governed?

"ART. 15. Government, as a fixed and stable cause in the progress of human affairs, is finally productive of a large amount of good or evil; it is strictly, in its operation, a moral cause in the formation of character; for it necessarily presents circumstances and considerations, in the light of reasons and motives, which lead to results in the formation of character, that become habitual and permanent. The good of all concerned, therefore, should be the object proposed in the adoption of any form of government; and when a system of government is adopted which calls off the attention of the governed from the general welfare, by depriving them of all control in the enactment and execution of the laws, *the natural and unavoidable tendency of a government of this description is vicious and demoralizing; and such are the character and influence of all non-elective governments.*

"ART. 16. Any government that does not allow the people to meet, deliberate, and decide upon matters that concern themselves, is evidently oppressive. For those who are not the representatives of the people to make laws for them, and then deny them the freedom of candid inquiry and honest animadversion, is a measure as irrational as it is unjust. The maxim which assumes that the ministry have a right to rule and dictate exclusively in the great concerns of religion, is the fruitful source of *implicit faith*, which tamely, and without inquiry, receives instruction at the hands of men, as authoritative and final—impiously receiving 'for doctrines, the commandments of men, and perverting the oracles of

God.' When the ministry judge and determine for the people, without their legitimate concurrence, as matter of right, conformity becomes a question of policy, instead of resulting from conscience and principle. A government which denies to the governed the right to inquire, remonstrate, and demand withheld justice; which, from its structure and operation, is calculated to darken the understanding and mislead the judgment; and thus compel obedience to its measures in the great interests of right and wrong, must be essentially unjust, and ought not to be submitted to."

I have already made this letter too long, without enumerating a moiety of the rights you have usurped from the people.

You tax the people, and yet deny them the right of representation. Taxation without *representation* is an oppressive form of tyranny. Methodist ministers fix their own salaries as pastors, as agents, as editors, &c., &c., to the end of the chapter. They decide what religious interests they will support, and how much money shall be devoted to each, and how much money shall be raised from the people of each circuit or district. The preachers fix the amount the people have to pay, and say boastingly, "Protest if you *dare*."

"At the late annual meeting of the American Board, Dr. Durbin is reported to have described the manner in which the Missionary Board of the Methodist E. Church treat the question of funds, in the following language:

"'They do not inquire, he said, what their churches are able or willing to contribute. They simply make an estimate of the amount needed to carry on their mission; for this amount they draw upon the churches, and say to them, Protest it, if you dare.'"—*Zion Herald.*

They have the entire money power of their Church in their own hands, and use it without regard to the wishes of the

people, or without being amenable to them for the manner of its disbursement.

The Methodist clergy are a monied monopoly, and possess far more TEMPORAL *power than the Catholic clergy of this country, and this is a dangerous feature to American republicanism.*

"Why is it that we fear Romanism? Not simply because the votaries of the Pope yield assent to the ridiculous superstitions of their debasing religion. Not simply because their priests and bishops exercise oppressively an assumed power. This last feature is anti-American in Romanism as well as in Episcopal Methodism; but this does not trouble us. If Romanists or Methodists choose to degrade themselves by submission to priests or bishops, and voluntarily sacrifice that liberty which, as freemen, they have a *right* to enjoy, it is their own fault. But the supporting of assumptions to *temporal power* is just cause of alarm. The effort of Romish bishops to gain the control of all the Catholic Church property, has been loudly decried, and some noble instances have occurred where even Roman Catholic congregations have determined, in the exercise of their freedom as American citizens, to resist these arrogant demands. But it seems to be forgotten that Episcopal Methodist bishops make the same demand, and this demand is submitted to without a murmur by American Methodists. Who hold the deeds for every inch of ground, and every Episcopal Methodist church in the land? The Conference, *alias*, the bishops. Where is the Methodist Episcopal congregation that has dared to follow the example of the Roman Catholic congregations above alluded to, in opposing this arrogant assumption of temporal power? Let Americans in the Episcopal Methodist Church blush to be told that, with all their boasted intelligence and freedom, they fear excommu

nication from their bishops more than Roman Catholics fear the Pope's nuncio, or the bulls of Pio Nono himself.

"A vast amount of property is thus held under the control of Methodist bishops. A lay member of the Church has no voice in the disposition of funds which he himself aided to raise. The preachers can dispose of it only by suggesting the way in which it may be appropriated. The bishops control it, and may designate it as they see fit.

"Now, is there no danger to American liberty from a hierarchy possessing such ample pecuniary resources as these? Are the bishops of the Episcopal Methodist Church so immaculately pure as to be beyond the reach of selfish and sectarian prejudices? May the time not arrive when they will consider it to be their duty to use their vast influence and assumed power in politics? May they not conclude that they will be doing God service by using their influence to induce political action which will favor Episcopal Methodism? The support which they see the lay members of their churches giving to their assumptions of *temporal* as well as spiritual power, has a direct tendency to encourage them to exercise that power in controlling the affairs of the State for their own advancement, and so as to secure the continuance of their power unmolested. The man who can see and feel it right to exercise a bishop's office in the Episcopal Methodist Church, can scarcely see it wrong to exercise a monarch's office in the State, for both are alike, and equally anti-American."*

You deny the people the privilege and right to hold the meeting-houses they have built with their own money. You deny them the right to appoint the trustees who shall hold their chapels in trust for them. You and your fellow-bishops hold the keys of all the Methodist chapels, meeting-

* J. Q. Adams.

houses in America, and you can lock them up to-morrow so that no one could open them. You can excommunicate all the churches in a county or State, should they displease you—disobey your wishes, and deprive them of their ministers and consequently of the ordinances of religion, the baptism of their children, until they returned to your episcopal jurisdiction and allegiance! Could the Pope of Rome do more? He was wont to do the like of this, and you can do it.

You deny the people their right to invite whom they wish to preach in houses they have built with their own money. If all the members of any given society should wish a certain minister, who may have made himself obnoxious to the Episcopal displeasure by showing the unscripturalness and anti-republican principle of Episcopacy, to preach one sermon for them—they could not, all together, give him the house to preach in, unless the chief ministers, the rulers, saw fit.

You deny your members their inalienable right to elect their own preachers.

You deny the existence of the right. You call for proof. I answer:—The people are *sovereigns*. They are masters rather than slaves. They, at least, are commanded to call no man, be he pope or bishop, master; and therefore that man or potentate or clerical power is not in legitimate existence that has the right to set over the churches of God whomsoever he pleases for a pastor, and displace them when he pleases, in total disregard of the expressed wishes of the people.

That the general Conference can by a vote withdraw its jurisdiction from half a nation was illustrated by the act of that body, in 1844, and the despotic powers of the Conference established by the admission of the counsel and the decision of an American court! A writer places both facts in a strong light.

"All the Conference did towards a division was to agree that if the Southern brethren found it necessary to organize separately, they would withdraw their jurisdiction from such portion as choose to belong to the Southern organization. This they had a right to do, for they have power to withdraw their jurisdiction from any portion of their field of labor, at any time they please, from any Conference, district or station. The government is with the ministry; they take the people under their jurisdiction, and they can withdraw that jurisdiction when they please, and it has often been done on a small scale. The bishops appoint the preachers, and by their appointment the preachers acquire their jurisdiction in their respective localities, but let the bishops decline to appoint a preacher to a given circuit or station, and leave its name out of the minutes, which they have power to do, and the work of jutisdiction is done. Bishop Hedding once told St. Paul's Church, at Lowell, Mass., that he could not appoint a preacher to serve them, on account of some objectional resolutions they had adopted. The Church was afterwards pronounced out of the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by a public proclamation, issued by the preacher that had been appointed to the charge. Was there not a withdrawing of jurisdiction in this case? The plan of separation was also a withdrawal of jurisdiction on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and if it was on a larger scale, it was done in a less objectionable manner.

"But they are placed in an unpleasant position; to save their funds they have submitted their church polity to the examination and decision of a court, and that court has passed upon it, and decided that the General Conference acted within its lawful powers in adopting the plan of separation. They opposed this decision on the ground that for the General Conference to possess such power is despotic and dan

gerous, and we agree with them in this conclusion. But the Conference did adopt that plan. If they did it lawfully, as the court has decided, they possess despotic and dangerous power, according to their own admission; but if they did it unlawfully, then the General Conference of 1844 performed a despotic and unlawful act, for which there is no redress under any constitutional provision, and which a civil court has failed to correct, and what they have done once they can do again, whenever occasion shall arise. They may take which horn of the dilemma they please."

Yet this iniquitous power you claim and exercise. You possess unlimited power over both preachers and people.

"No appeal can be made from the bishop's designation of a preacher to his field of labor. The preacher may not wish to go to the field assigned, and the Church may not desire to have the preacher who is sent to them; but there is no appeal. Go he must, and have him the people must, or they are both liable to excommunication from the Methodist Episcopal Church. An instance or two will illustrate this point:—

"At the session of the New York Conference, in 1839, it was in some way intimated to the Washington street Church, in Brooklyn, Long Island, that the Rev. B. Griffin was to be appointed to that charge. The Church accordingly, through a committee appointed for the purpose, presented itself before the bishop and remonstrated against Mr. Griffin's being sent to them as their pastor. But the remonstrance was disregarded, and Mr. Griffin was stationed at Washington street."

'At the session of the New England Conference, in 1841, both of the large societies in Lowell, Mass., petitioned for particular preachers; but they were told that they should not have the men they asked for. One of the churches (St. Paul's) then requested to be left without a supply by the

bishop—having made arrangements to employ a local preacher. But the bishop regarded not the request, but *forced* a preacher upon them. In both these cases, the preachers petitioned for also added their request to the voice of the churches, so that the wishes of both preachers and people were disregarded.

"The other church, after being denied the preacher they wanted, selected some four or five others, and stated to the bishop that they would be satisfied with either of them. But no; they *must not* have either; and to cap the climax of insult, the very man was sent them to whom they had *objected.* In consequence of rejecting their preachers and electing others, they were publicly declared to be without the pale of the Church. This alarming step of excommunicating whole churches without the form of a trial, developes another of the anti-American features of Episcopal Methodism—especially when it is considered that the subject was carried up to the bishop, and he approved of it, and pronounced it *Methodism.*"*

I might multiply instances of this kind, but the limits of this tract will not permit. The simple fact that the power thus assumed by Methodist bishops, and countenanced and supported by the Methodist Episcopal Church may, at any time, be exercised oppressively, is sufficient to prove that this system is anti-American; for Americanism makes no provision for the exercise of oppression, but constantly guards against the abuse even of *delegated* power. Episcopal Methodism, on the contrary, countenances and supports the oppressive exercise of *assumed* power. It is therefore Republicanism backwards.

You deny to the members of the society the right to have any

* Book for the times, pages 114–116

voice in deciding who is a proper member to be received into their fellowship. You give to the preacher in charge the authority to say who shall, and who shall not be admitted into a Methodist society, and it is for him to say with whom the dear people must fellowship and commune as a member.

You deny to the private member the exercise of his inalienable right as an American citizen and Christian, to be tried, when arraigned, by a jury of his peers, and the right to challenge the jury.

The private member is wholly at the mercy of the preacher in charge. It is in the power of the preacher to have any private member acquitted though guilty, or condemned though innocent. I say the Discipline undoubtedly gives him the power. This feature was ably reviewed in 1848 by the editor of the *Calvinistic Magazine*, and he being an eminent Presbyterian Doctor of Divinity, I will allow him to speak.

"*The Discipline is a rod of iron in its regulations as to the trial of its private members.* The book says:—'How shall an accused member be brought to trial? Ans. Before the society of which he is a member, or a select number of them, in the presence of a bishop, elder, deacon, or preacher, in the following manner: Let the accused and accuser be brought face to face; but if this cannot be done, let the next best evidence be procured. If the accused person be found guilty by the decision of a majority of the members before whom he is brought to trial, and the crime be such as is expressly forbidden by the Word of God, sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, let the minister or preacher who has charge of the circuit expel him.' 'Nevertheless, if (in any of several cases mentioned) the minister or preacher differ in judgment from a majority of

the society, or select number, concerning the innocence or guilt of the accused person, the trial in such case may be referred by the minister or preacher to the ensuing quarterly meeting Conference.' (P. 142–3.) The same right of appeal to the next quarterly Conference is allowed to the excluded person, with the exception of such as absent themselves from trial, &c. 'And the majority of the travelling and local preachers, exhorters, stewards, and leaders present, shall finally determine the case.' (Page 145.)

"Here we have the rod of iron. Such a process of trial —such a provision, or rather such a no-provision to secure justice, in the trial of a Church member, cannot be equalled in any Protestant denomination. It has no parallel out of the Papacy. Let us briefly examine it. 'The member shall be brought to trial before *the society* of which he is a member, or *a select number* of them, in the presence of the bishop, elder, deacon, or preacher.' Now, we ask, does the book tell us *how* the member is to be *brought* before the *society*, or select *number?* No; the book is silent. *To whom* must the *accuser* go with his accusation? The book is silent. How much notice as to time is given to the accused? The book is silent. Is the accused told by formal citation *the charge* against him, and the names of the *witnesses* to support it? The book is silent. May he be turned into trial at a moment's warning, without any preparation? The book is silent. *And that silence is ominous and terrible.* That silence leads us to believe that the bishop, elder, deacon, or preacher, *has the whole arrangement of this beginning of actual process.* He may or may not receive the accusation at his pleasure. He may or he may not give citation to the accused, with due notice, other than his pleasure. Here, then, flagrant wrong may be done at the threshold of the court of justice.

"Once more. Suppose the accused is before the judicatory. Who compose that judicatory? The book says, the *society* of which the accused is a member, or *a select number* of them. Very well. But here we ask again, *who* decides whether the accused shall be tried before *the society*, or *a select number?* The book is silent. Again. *Who* chooses that *select number?* The book is silent. *What does this silence mean?* Does it teach us that this part of the process of trial is, also, under the control of the preacher? May he decide that the accused shall be tried by a select number; and may he choose, or manage the summoning of that select number? *Then he may directly or indirectly pack that jury.* Look farther. 'Let the accused and accuser be brought face to face; but if this cannot be done, *let the next best evidence* be procured.' Again we ask, *how* is this next best evidence to be procured? The book is silent. Is there any thing about the citation of witnesses? No. Any thing as to a commission to take the testimony of absent witnesses, and the *right* of the *accused* to attend and cross-examine? No; the book is silent. Are we to infer that the bishop, elder, deacon or preacher is left by the book to *procure* this *next best evidence* in any way *he may think proper?* And might they procure this *next best evidence* after this fashion: —*Might they send a committee to take the testimony of a lady, who was asked to tell what a second lady had told her, a third lady had said? and might this third lady be tried on such testimony and expelled the Methodist Church?*

Verily, the accused member in the Methodist Church has *no safeguard* around him. For, our readers will see, *First*, that the original trial before *the society*, or *select number*, may be a farce, from the prodigious control of the preacher over *the society*, or in the appointment of *the select number*. *Secondly*, that the preacher has the right to refer the trial, if

he differ in judgment from *the society*, or *the select number*, to the ensuing quarterly meeting Conference. Will it be said that the member, if condemned, is allowed to appeal? Yes, he may appeal. But where must he carry his appeal? Why, 'He shall be allowed an appeal to that same next quarterly meeting Conference.' And there, truly, he has less chance against the preacher than he had before the society, or the select number. For who compose the Quarterly Conference? Ans. The travelling and local preachers, exhorters, stewards, and leaders. Now, from the book, the exhorters, stewards and leaders, whatever may be true of the local preachers, are mere puppets in the hands of the itinerant ministers. And yet that court of appeals '*finally determines the case.*'

"This is the rod of iron with a vengeance. A lawyer of highest standing in our country told us, that this whole thing called a trial in the Methodist Church, was the veriest burlesque upon justice. And we, here, do now *challenge* any *lawyer* to come out and say that there is security against wrong to the accused, afforded by the Methodist Discipline. We defy him to do it. We do not challenge a Methodist editor to gabble silly sentences. We invite a lawyer—a judge of the rights of man in courts of justice, to meet this challenge, and to meet it over his own proper name. We defy him to do it.

"N. B.—It is well to caution our readers who have not the Discipline. Methodists may tell them, as they told us, when we had not examined the book, 'Oh! our trial is the fairest in the world—*it is by arbitration!* The accuser chooses one; the accused another; these two a third. The preacher has little to do with it.' But on consulting the book, we found that *this arbitration trial* had reference *only* to cases of 'any dispute between two or more members concerning the pay

ment of debts.' It has nothing to do with the regular trial for Church offences. Mark that.

"Again. Methodists may say, 'Our trial is, *in fact,* conducted *so,* and *so,* and *so.*' But let it be fully borne in mind, that *any mode* of trial, which actually takes place, *not in the Discipline,* is *nothing else* than the *permission* of the preacher—*his mere pleasure to let it be so.* And such *mode* of trial, *not in the Discipline,* may be as various as the whims or consistency, the tyranny or kindness, the arrogance or humility, the regard for or disregard of popularity, which will be found in the minds of the many thousand itinerant preachers. Trial, thus controlled, is a rod of iron."

I cannot allow this subject to pass without calling more especial attention to one feature not anti-American only, but anti-civilized. The member when arraigned is not allowed to challenge the jury which the preacher may select. The jury may consist of his most inveterate enemies, and still he has no more right to object than the poor victim in the hands of the inquisitorial fathers!

The right to challenge jurors (when *trial* by jury exists) is acknowledged in all civilized and Christian countries, even in monarchical countries. The right is considered a natural right—inalienable and indefeasible, and to violate it is considered a barbarous outrage upon humanity, and a libel upon civilization. And yet the clergy—the fathers of the Methodist hierarchy—deny it to their subjects, and that in republican America; and the boasting democrats of America submit to it—ay, endorse and support the barbarity! We do not misrepresent Methodism in this; Dr. Bond in his "Economy of Methodism," p. 87, thus admits and lamely apologizes for it: "The right to challenge jurors, it is alleged, is acknowledged in all civilized and Christian countries. * * * We admit, however, that all civilized and Christian countries

ought to adopt it as a civil institution [and yet Methodism ought not to adopt it as a religious one!] of inestimable value; but it does not follow that precisely the same regulation ought to be, or even can be, adopted in Church government, accompanied with the right to challenge jurors. The society that forbids a fair trial is an inquisition, not a Church."

Then it follows that a Methodist society is an inquisition, and not a Church. But Methodists resign the right of suffrage not only in the election of their legislators and representatives, and their preachers, but in receiving and excluding members from their societies. The travelling preachers are omnipotent every where, ruling and controlling all. However unjust and iniquitous their administration, the people must suffer in silence. They are forbidden to express their dissent. The threat is, "Complain, if you dare. You will be guilty of speaking *uncharitably* or *unprofitably* and evil of your ministers, which is expressly forbidden on pain of exclusion. The Discipline forbids uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of *magistrates* and *ministers*." [Chap. I., sec. 4, page 37.] Exclusion here stares in the face the one disposed to condemn clerical iniquity and intrigue. Here is one of the first principles of Protestantism renounced, one of the crowning glories of Christianity dishonored and rejected.

"Art. 14th. Whenever the members of a church resign the right of suffrage, and of discussing freely and fearlessly the conduct of their rulers, whether it be done by direct concession, or indirectly by attaching themselves to, and continuing within the pale of a Church where such a system of polity obtains, they renounce, to a fearful extent, one of the first principles of the Protestant religion, and bring dishonor upon its name. Whenever spiritual rulers attempt

to check a perfectly free communication of thoughts and feelings among the people—when the lips and the pens of the laity are interdicted, without their oversight and license—when they attempt to repress honest convictions and free inquiry—when their disapprobation is shown to all who do not support them, and their displeasure incurred by the diffusion of intelligence among the people not calculated to increase their power and reputation; then it becomes the duty of the people to decline their oversight, as men unworthy to rule the Church of God. The rock on which the Church has split for ages is, that the sovereign power to regulate all ecclesiastical matters (not decided by the Scriptures, and which of right belongs to a Christian community as such) has, by a most mischievous and unnatural policy, misnamed expediency, been transferred to the hands of a *few* ministers, who have been, in part, the patricians of the ministry, and the aristocracy of the Church."—*Bascom.*

Upon one of the court journals of the South this motto can be seen: "Methodism is religion on horseback." Now, in view of the facts and features presented—in view of the principles laid down by Bishop Bascom—the usurpation of the rights and the systematized oppression of the people, I am compelled to amend it thus:

"Methodism is the *preachers* on the *people's* back."

LETTER XXV.

IS METHODISM REPUBLICAN?

It may be regarded a work of supererogation to discuss this question separately, after all the preceding discussions, directly or indirectly, involving it. But I know whom I oppose. I know that your preachers all over the land boast that Methodism is Republican—that it was modelled after the government of this nation, or our national government after it, and doubtless they succeed in making many of their followers believe it, and reëcho the sentiment. But is it republican? What is the signification of the term? Let Webster be the standard:—

"Republic, a commonwealth; a state in which the exercise of the sovereign power is lodged in representatives elected by the people. In modern usage it differs from a democracy or democratic state, in which the people exercise the powers of sovereignty in person."

"Republican, pertaining to a republic; consisting of a commonwealth."

"A Hierarchy, the persons who have the exclusive direction of things sacred; used especially of a body of clergy of different ranks or orders."

In all republican governments, then, the sovereign, all-directing and controlling power must be vested in the people. An organization in which the people have no voice, is destitute of the *first feature* of a republican government. Not the faintest claim to republicanism can be set up for it. How is it in the polity of Methodism? Dr. Hodgson declares that the supreme power is in the hands of the *travelling*

preachers. Is it not then a hierarchy? If this is not enough to settle the question, I might refer you to the operation of Cookman's Great Iron Wheel illustration,* but I am disposed to treat this candidly, investigate principles, and institute comparisons and contrasts for the sake of the reader and inquirer; for the age is upon us when this question of Church government will be intensely agitated.

To decide upon the character of a government, we must first ascertain where or in whom the sovereignty resides, and what is meant by sovereignty. Writers on the law of nature and of nations, when they speak with exactness, use the word sovereignty to denote, not the supreme power employed in *administering* the government, but that on which the existence of the government depends—the source of all power.

In an absolute monarchy the sovereignty resides in the king; in an aristocracy it resides in the nobles; in a democracy or republic it resides in the people. In a mixed government it resides partly in the one and partly in the other.

In the British government, the sovereignty resides in the Parliament, that is, in the king, lords, and commons. There, these combined have power to do whatever of a political nature they choose. They have power not only to alter the laws, but to change at pleasure the constitution of the kindgom.

Very different is it in these United States. Here the sovereignty resides not in the government, either State or Federal, but in the people. They delegate to their rulers, not the sovereignty, but simply the exercise of certain functions of the sovereignty, reserving the rest to themselves. So careful are the people, that they make a distinct delegation of legislative, judicial and executive powers to different men, and then make a further division of them among the Federal

* The reader is invited to examine the engraving of the Iron Wheel.

and State authorities. All our constitutions, State and Federal, abound in restrictions on the powers of our rulers.

The President is the supreme executive authority of the Union, having under him various subordinate executive officers, as the members of his cabinet, the marshals, the collectors of customs, and all others whose business is to execute the civil laws of the Union. But these, take them either individually or collectively, are not sovereign.

The Governor is the supreme executive authority in each State. The mayors of cities, the sheriffs of counties, and the constables of wards and of townships, are so many subordinate executive officers. But neither are these sovereign.

In each State, there is a supreme court, having under it various inferior or subordinate courts.

In the United States, there is a supreme court, to which the district and circuit courts are subordinate. But we cannot, if we speak with technical propriety, say that the United States Supreme Court is sovereign, for that is a body of limited powers bound by the constitution and all the laws of the Union, and the very nature of political sovereignty is such that it knows of no limit on itself imposed by human authority. Thus the British Parliament acknowledges no power above itself. And thus the people of the United States admit of no power above them to prevent their altering the constitution at pleasure. Each individual is, indeed, bound to obey the laws: but the PEOPLE, in their collective capacity, are sovereign, and as such responsible to no human tribunal.

Let us now apply these principles to Church government.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church the sovereignty resides in the whole body of travelling preachers in full connexion. There is no limit on their powers in their government of the Church, except what their own sense of justice, or their own sense of expediency, under the laws of the land, may impose.

In the Presbyterian society the sovereignty resides in the ministry and ruling elders, who govern the body exclusively through the Session, the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. The laity are eligible to none of these bodies, save that the elders are elected from the laity, thouh this is of seldom occurrence, since the eldership is an imperial body ruling for life or good behavior. Neither the elders nor ministers are amenable to the people—the laity.

In the Methodist Protestant Church, the sovereignty resides in the whole body of male members, as well lay as clerical, who are twenty-one years of age. And they have no other limit on their powers, in relation to their own ecclesiastical organization, than have the travelling preachers in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In the Baptist and Congregational Churches, the sovereignty resides in the whole body of members, without distinction of sex or age. All are equal, and possessed of equal rights, equal authority and power. The Baptist Churches are pure democracies, and the only form of purely democratic governments in the world. Each Church—the congregated membership—calls and dismisses its pastors, receives, dismisses, disciplines and excludes its members. Before the whole Church the accused person is tried. The Bible alone is the criterion, it being the only rule of faith or practice acknowledged. The decision of a majority is the ultimate verdict, and since the Church is independent, there is no power above it, and consequently there is no appeal from its decisions; which agrees with Matt. xviii:—"If he will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." The Church can reconsider her act, whenever a majority can be found in favor of it.

There is this difference, also, to be marked between the Baptist and Congregational Churches on the one side, and

the Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Protestant Church on the other. Both the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Protestant Church are consolidated governments. The Methodist Episcopal Church is, throughout its bounds, *one* Church, divided into different societies according to localities. And the like remark applies to the Methodist Protestant Church. On the other hand, each Baptist and each Congregational Church, is in itself an independent sovereignty. Many of these form associations, but these are alliances, which may be dissolved at pleasure. According to their views, a Church does not forfeit or in the least degree impair its Church character by withdrawing from such associations. Now, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, the sovereignty, as already stated, resides in the whole body of the travelling ministers, and it has pleased them to retain in their own hands the supreme legislative and supreme judicial powers. They have delegated these to no one. It has, indeed, pleased them to divide these powers in a certain manner between the Annual and General Conferences, but when it pleases them they can make a new distribution of these powers among themselves. The power which imposes restrictions can remove them. A kind of inferior power of legislating and judging they have delegated to the Quarterly Conferences, or to their members, and also a power of judging in certain cases to committees appointed by the ministers.

The supreme executive power the travelling ministers have delegated to the bishops; a subordinate power to the presiding elders; a more subordinate power to the ministers in charge of circuits and stations; and a still more subordinate power to the Quarterly Conferences.

In the Methodist Protestant as in the Methodist Episcopal Church, there are superior and subordinate authorities. But there is this marked difference between them. In the

Methodist Episcopal Church, all power descends from the travelling preachers to the people. In the Methodist Protestant Church, all governing power ascends from the people to the minister. They have a constitution, which was formed by their delegates in convention assembled.

Very, very different, is it in the Methodist Episcopal Church, as was eloquently said by a Methodist writer, more than twenty years ago:—

"The Bishop appoints the minister; the minister appoints the class-leader and stewards; these appoint the sexton, who, in his turn, appoints the grave-digger. So that, from him who soars aloft and overlooks God's heritage, down to him who delves in the earth and buries the bodies of the saints, all derive their power from the ministry, and all are responsible to them and to them only, for their proceedings."

A great deal of pains has been taken by some writers to show that the laity have *some* power in the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was quite unnecessary for them to take this pains. The laity *have* some power in the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church; but it is precisely such power as the subjects of the Sultan of Turkey, the Shah of Persia, and the Autocrat of Russia have in the government of their respective countries—that is, a power derived from their superior rulers.

I will allow the pen of a distinguished Methodist writer to draw the contrast between our republican government and the polity of Methodism,* at length:—

"It is a principle of politics, and a principle verified by all human experience, that unchecked power, in the hands of any set of men, no matter whether lay or ecclesiastic, will

* This article appeared in the *Philadelphia Church Advocate*, an able Methodist paper—not a court journal, of course.

degenerate into tyranny, and be exercised, not for the welfare of the governed, but for the gratification of the passions and the promotion of the interests of the governors.

"To guard against this, the American people have made a most careful division of power among the township, county, State and Federal authorities, taking care that no one officer shall have more power than is necessary for the proper discharge of his functions, and that they shall be so arranged as to act as checks and guards on one another. With how much jealousy this principle is watched, is evident from the frequent discussion we have of the subject of 'State Rights.' Not content, however, with this division of power, the American people make another into legislative, judicial, and executive, and are very careful that one department shall not encroach on another.

"But how is it in the Church—in our Methodist Episcopal Church? Here all power is in the hands of a, comparatively speaking, small body of men, the travelling preachers, and there is no division of it, except such as they make for their own convenience. If they divide this power among the General and Annual Conferences, it is for their own convenience. If they delegate a part of it to the Quarterly Conferences, it is only that they may thereby the more easily carry out their scheme of ecclesiastical policy. The Quarterly Conferences have no powers except those which the travelling preachers have generously been pleased to grant them, and this power, which the travelling preachers have granted, they can, if they should deem it politic, take away. Even the power the private members have of recommending candidates for the offices of local preachers and exhorters, is not held by them as a right. It is, like the power of the Quarterly Conferences, a gracious concession by the travelling preachers.

"In the Methodist Episcopal Church, no one, except the travelling preachers, has any *rights*. All that the local preachers, exhorters, class-leaders, and private members possess, are mere *privileges*, for which they are indebted to the sovereign will and pleasure of their 'Divine Right' rulers.

"Perhaps it may be said that the Methodist Episcopal system has its own checks and guards—that the bishops are checks on the presiding elders, the presiding elders on the ministers in charge of circuits and stations, and the ministers in charge on their assistants. But such checks are to be found in every despotism. They are the mere relations of superiors and subordinates, without which no government, either free or despotic, can exist. There is nothing in them which insures effective responsibility to the people: consequently nothing in them to prevent the government from degenerating into an instrument for gratifying the passions and promoting the interests of the governors, instead of being what it ought to be—an instrument for promoting the welfare of the governed.

"Under the Methodist Episcopal system, one and the same man may, as a member of the General Conference, make laws and regulations, and afterwards, as minister in charge of circuit or station, give a judicial interpretation of them, and then carry them into execution. The law-giving, the judicial, and the executive functions, are all united in his person. He can act as presiding judge, and the same time as prosecuting attorney; select his associate judges, direct all the proceedings, pronounce sentence, and finally carry it into execution. If he does not do all this, it is an act of gracious forbearance on his part, or else a prudent deference to public opinion. 'The Discipline' gives him power to do it.

"Whatever his decision may be, there is no appeal from it, except to the Quarterly Conference, and that very Quarterly Conference consists, for the most part, of members who can be appointed and removed at his pleasure.

"It may be that the court created by the ministers in charge, may give a decision not exactly according to his wishes. Then it is duly provided that, in cases of 'inveighing against the Discipline,' and other cases which are duly enumerated, 'if the minister or preacher differ in judgment from the majority of the society or the select number, concerning the innocence or guilt of the accused person, the trial in such case may be referred by the minister or preacher, to the ensuing Quarterly Conference.'

"Did ever any thing equal this? According to the principles of common law, no man can be tried twice for the same offence. But this is not the principle of Methodist Episcopal canon law. It is not enough, if a travelling preacher has an antipathy to a private member, that he can determine, in the first instance, whether he shall be tried by the whole society, or by a select number. It is not enough that he has power to determine how many this 'select number' shall be, and of what persons it shall consist. It is not enough that he has power to direct the whole proceedings. If they do not terminate exactly as he desires, he has power to remove the case to the Quarterly Conference, and then, if the class-leaders do not decide as he wishes, he has power to remove them and appoint others in their stead.

"Can the travelling preachers read this, their own law and not blush that they have suffered it to disfigure their statute-book?"

You must remember, and I hope the reader will remember, that it is a Methodist, and a member of the Methodist E. Church in full connection and fellowship, who writes this

He knows whereof he affirms—he has watched the workings of the wheel-within-a-wheel power for years, and now, for the honor and glory of Methodism, which he loves, he would have the despotic and tyrannical features wiped out, and the system christianized and scripturalized, and consequently republicanized. But I allow him to proceed:

"Perhaps it may be alleged that though all this is strictly true according to the letter, yet, in its practical application it is much less oppressive than might be supposed, owing to the good temper and good disposition of those who are intrusted with its administration; and that prudential motives restrain in the exercise of their power, many travelling preachers who have neither good temper nor good disposition. To a certain extent this is true. If it were not, the system could not be endured for a single year. But every correct system of government contains within itself checks on the power of the rulers. Knowing that the best of men are fallible, it trusts as little as possible to the goodness of men. Against abuses of power it does not depend on checks from without, but on checks from within.

"These evils do not, however, exist [only] in theory. The venerable John Hood, who was one of the original members of the society in this city, and who was for more than fifty years a class-leader at St. George's and at the Union, used to say that the conduct of the travelling preachers had been arbitrary from the beginning. How could it be otherwise? Arbitrary power *must* produce arbitrary action. The *soubriquet* by which Richard Rankin, Mr. Wesley's first superintendent on this continent, was known, was that of 'The Proud Scot.' These three little words speak volumes, for they show the judgment the first race of American Methodists had of one of their earliest rulers. Arbitrary proceedings, among which were the violent placing and displacing

of class-leaders, led to the secession of a number of the most respectable members from St. George's, and to the foundation of the Union Church in this city.* That Church remained independent of the Conference for one whole year. It is not correct to speak of these evils as existing in theory only. The arbitrary proceedings of the travelling preachers drive thousands every year from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"But we have not yet given all the checks which the American people have instituted to prevent abuses of power. Not content with the division of functions already mentioned, they will not suffer any of their rulers, the judiciary excepted, to hold power for more than a certain period. The members of the State Legislatures are elected for but one or two years, the Governors of States are elected for but two or three years, or perhaps for but one, and then not always reëligible. The members of the larger house of Congress are elected for but two years; the members of the Senate for but six years. The President himself for but four. But our travelling preachers, like the kings and nobility of Europe, hold their power for life. At least no one of them can be displaced, but by the action of his brother itinerants. No matter how bad his conduct may be, no action of the laity can divest him of his 'Divine Right' to govern the Methodist people.

"In the State, by the frequent recurrence of elections, the strict responsibility of the rulers to their constituents is preserved. But the travelling preachers are under no such responsibility. In point of fact they have no constituents. They represent no body but themselves and their own order.

"There is, indeed, one branch of their government, in which

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* Philadelphia.

the American people have given some degree of permanency to their officials, and that is the judiciary.* But they have not left this branch of the government without suitable checks. The presiding judge does not, as in the Methodist Episcopal Church, select his associates. But they all derive their authority from one appointing power, and thus each is made a check on the others. They are further checked by juries fresh from the people; and still further by the bar, men learned in the law, who, if they find a judge acting improperly, may have him removed by impeachment or address. In this manner is secured an effective responsibility of the judiciary to the people, though in a less direct way than in the case of the legislative and executive departments of the government.

"Having imposed all these checks, the American people have given some degree of permanency to the tenure of office by the judges. And in so doing they have acted wisely, as, without it, there would be no uniformity in judicial proceedings.

"But in our Church, as if it was intended that the Methodist Episcopal system should be in all things the antipode of the American political system, we have directly the reverse. Our primary courts are mere committees, appointed as occasion may arise, or *pro re nata*, as a physician or lawyer would say, and appointed, except in arbitration of debts, by the travelling preacher or through his sufferance. It is true, indeed, that the travelling preacher may, instead of referring the case to 'a select number,' refer it to the whole society; but that, too, is a fluctuating body, and utterly unqualified to act in a judicial capacity. The court

* The inferior judges are now chosen by the people in many of the States.

of appeals, the Quarterly Conference, is no better. That is composed of men selected, not for their ability to judge, but on account of their 'gifts' for preaching, praying, exhorting, and class-leading, with a few added to attend to pecuniary matters.

"A body so constituted ought to be a mere council, and never attempt to exercise judicial functions. The American people never refer judiciary cases to town meetings or mixed assemblies. They refer them to bodies composed of a few men, carefully selected on account of their ability to discharge the duties of judges.

"The Methodist Episcopal system of government is bad from beginning to end. But the judiciary part of it is the worst of all.

"We have not yet finished the contrast. In affairs of State, the utmost latitude of discussion is allowed. From the press and from the stump, our highest rulers are assailed, not only vigorously, but virulently, and quite as often unjustly as justly. This is not without its evils, but the evils are not to be compared with the benefits that arise from this liberty.

"Without freedom of speech and of the press, there can be no free government. But in the Methodist Episcopal Church, we have neither. There is a law forbidding the members 'to speak evil of magistrates and ministers.' It it true that there is reason to suspect that by ministers Mr. Wesley meant not ministers of religion, but ministers of State, or that if he meant ministers of religion, he had special reference to the clergy of the Church of England. It is certain that he did not mean travelling preachers, for this law was adopted before the first Conference was held, and he never was in the habit of calling the travelling preachers ministers,' or addressing them as 'reverends.' Our 'tine-

rant preachers, however, who are the supreme judges, so construe the law as to make it mean their precious selves, and they are also the judges as to what constitutes 'evil speaking' in the sense of the statute, and what punishment shall be inflicted on him who dares thus to touch 'the Lord's anointed.'

"It might, however, be supposed that the discussion of abstract principles would be allowed. Not so. Whoever ventures to assail any point or principle of Methodist polity, does it at his peril. There is another law about 'inveighing against the Discipline.' In what this 'inveighing' consists, the travelling preacher is the judge; and how he can arrange the 'select number,' or the Quarterly Conference, so as to yield him due support in his judgment, must be evident from what we have already said of the structure of our courts ecclesiastical.

"We have thus far confined our contrast of Methodist Episcopal and American political government, to practical administration. If we consider the foundation of the two governments, the contrast is not the less striking. Our political governments did not form themselves, but were formed by delegates chosen by the people for that express purpose. And our governments, as well State as Federal, can exercise no powers except those which have thus been expresssly delegated to them. Our 'constitutions,' as well the State as the Federal, are little more than restrictions on the powers of our rulers.

"But no convention of the Methodist people has ever been held to devise a plan of government for the Methodist Episcopal Church. Our travelling preachers assumed this power to themselves, without so much as asking the consent of the laity, and, of course, adapted every thing to the promotion of the interests and the gratifications of the passions of their

own order. In the American sense of the term, the Methodist Episcopal Church has no *constitution*. There are no restrictions on the power of the rulers, except those which they themselves have seen fit to impose.

"In the Asiatic sense of the term, the Methodist Episcopal Church has, indeed, a constitution, nasmuch as its government is made up of constituent parts. But, in this sense, Persia, Turkey, and Russia, have constitutions as well as Episcopal Methodism. If the Methodist people submit to the government that has been formed for them by others, it is from much the same principle that the subjects of Asiatic despotisms submit to the tyrannies that rule over them.

"In the State, all power ascends from the people to their rulers. In the Church, all power descends from the travelling preachers to the people.

"In the State all the citizens, stand on one level, and each is eligible to the highest offices in the government. In the Church, we have a noble order of men, the travelling preachers, who alone are considered competent to govern.

"In the State, the Methodist stands erect, with all the rights of a man and a freeman. In the Church, he is degraded, if not in his own eyes, in the eyes of others. 'I know not,' said a gentleman, 'on whom the Methodist Episcopal government reflects the most discredit—on the travelling preachers who have been guilty of these unwarrantable assumptions of power, or on the people who tamely submit to them.'

"Let a Methodist venture to complain of this state of things, and he is insultingly told, 'If you do not like the Church you can leave it.' It may be that it is endeared to him by the recollection of his father and mother, and by the memory of all whom he has loved best and respected most. It may be that all his social relations are in the Church. I

may be that himself and family have contributed liberally to its support for more than half a century. It may be that his talents are considerable, and his piety unquestionable. It may be that it is the only Church whose doctrines and forms of worship he can cordially approve. He has no objection, except to its government. This is enough. His 'Divine Right' rulers want none but patient and submissive subjects.—'If you do not like the Church you can leave it.'

"It is unnecessary, at least for the present, for us to give any other points of contrast of Methodist Episcopal and American political government. If the one is right, the other is wrong, and the reader must choose between them. The principles of right government are, we repeat it, the same in both Church and State, though they may differ to some extent in their application. They must necessarily be the same, for both Church and State have the same object in view, namely, the well-being of man; both prohibit the like evils; and the government of both is of necessity intrusted to fallible men.

"The 'Divine Rights' of kings, and the 'Divine Rights' of priests, are too closely connected to be separated. If one class of these rights is well founded, so is the other.

"If the minister of religion is a minister of God, so also is the minister of State, and he is so declared to be by the apostle.

"If it is right, then, that fallible men should be left without suitable checks in the government of the Church, it is also right that fallible men should be left without such checks in the government of the State. But it is *not* right that either statesmen or ecclesiastics should be intrusted with arbitrary power.

"The principles we contend for are the principles of liberty, which are deeply rooted in the hearts of the American peo-

ple, and it must be expected that, sooner or later, the Methodist portion of the American people will apply them to affairs of Church as well as affairs of State.

"There are some far-seeing men among the travelling preachers. To them we appeal. Do you think that principles so antagonistic as those of Methodist Episcopal and American political government, can exist together, and not at some time produce a collision? Do you wish such a convulsion as they have had in England? Whether you wish it or not, be assured that it will come, sooner or later. The secular press will then, as in England, take part in the controversy, and it will then be seen that the 'great body of intelligent men in America' sanction the views we advocate.

"Point out this danger to the more ignorant, the more bigoted, and the more prejudiced, of your brother itinerants. They may yield from a sense of policy, what they would never yield from a sense of justice. Persuade them to make a merit of necessity, and to give at once to the people a due share in the government. It is the only way in which the peace and prosperity of the Church can be placed on a permanent basis."

Prof. Deems, editor of the *Southern Methodist Pulpit*, urges that Methodism is too evidently behind the times, unsuited to the present age, and to the spirit of Americanism; that it did very well for the sooty colliers of England—mere servants, too ignorant for self-government—but that it is out of all question to call upon American citizens, presidents and professors of colleges, judges, and senators, to submit to a Church government constructed by one of the most violent of English Tories. So do I think it out of all question. I quote a paragraph from the pen of Prof. Deems, as it is copied from his periodical into the *Nashville Methodist Advocate*:—

"If we may apply the figure to Methodism, we can very readily see that a government suited to the sooty colliers of England, servants, and the uncultivated, who had grown up amid all the peculiarities of an aristocratic country, might hardly be fit for a Church among whose laymen are presidents and professors in colleges, judges of supreme courts, senators, and men liberalized by professional learning and polite associations. The fact is, John Wesley formed *societies;* ours is a *Church.* John Wesley did not make government a special study; but being a strong man and a violent Tory, and finding a sect gathering around him to be governed, he seized the reins—he became autocrat; and through his helpers, he governed most ably. It was very natural that when our Church was formed, it should be built somewhat after the model of the 'societies' of Wesley. Is it not too exact a copy, and may it not need mending? Even if Wesley had made government a study, and was by nature superior to the mass he controlled, there are laymen in our Church in this day, as great natively as Wesley, who have paid much more attention to the science of government. This is said with great deference and much veneration for many things in the character of John Wesley. He was before his times; ours before him."

Joseph Walker, of Dallas Co., Ala, wrote this in 1826:—

"I was personally acquainted with Bishop Asbury. I have heard him converse with the Rev. Hope Hull, who was a friend to reform, and I easily collected the information that our Church government was framed chiefly by subjects of Great Britain. Of course I never wondered much that such men should have shaped their code, and made their ecclesiastical laws, according to their own model. But when I consider that nearly all our present preachers are Americans; when I consider how excellent and powerful is the

republican spirit which prevails in these United States, and how equal the civil laws under which we live; when I see how carefully our civil and religious liberties are secured to the people of every possible variety of denomination, I am compelled to ask the question, Is not the form of our Church government, and the manner in which it is administered, an open insult to the Constitution of the United States? It surely is; and were it fully investigated and exposed to public view, such a despotic institution would make a bad appearance before the observation of a religious republic."

Dr. Stevens, editor of the *Boston Herald*, a *court journal*, and himself as humble a courtier as ever bowed or fawned at the foot of an Episcopal throne, under the excitement produced by the declarations of the lawyers and the decision of Judge Nelson, writes thus :—

"We are not opposed to the division of the property; we have shown this fully heretofore; but we are opposed to the constructions which these lawyers put upon our ecclesiastical system—constructions which must prove seriously detrimental to Methodism North and South, and which should call forth the remonstrances of both parties in this case. Methodism is essentially an hierarchical despotism, and needs immediate and thorough revision to adapt it to our times and our country. Its clergy have powers to direct or even divide the Church, which they have expressly denied (as in the Canada case), and which no body of free and intelligent laymen ought to tolerate one year."

I hope this chapter, since it is chiefly from the pens of Methodist writers belonging to your own society, will be read seriously, and without prejudice, by the Methodist people and American citizens.

PART II.

LETTER XXVI.

THE PECULIAR DOCTRINES AND USAGES OF METHODISM.

"*A Calvinistic Creed, a Popish Liturgy, and an Armenian Clergy.*"

DEAR SIR:—A review of the claims of Methodism to be considered a Church of Christ, would not be complete without a notice of the peculiarities of its creed—its doctrines and usages—its rites and ceremonies. All these are contained and enjoined in your Book of Discipline, to which you require all who join your societies implicitly to subscribe, and by which they are to be tried; and by its observance or violation they stand or fall—they are retained or excluded. It is preëminently prescribed as the sole rule of faith and practice to your members; they must believe and teach no more and no less than what is therein contained. It is the Bible of Methodists.

THE ORIGIN OF THE METHODIST DISCIPLINE.

With whom did it originate? Mr. Wesley informs us that, with some modifications, he compiled it from the Prayer-Book of the Church of England. Dr. Bond says, "Our doctrines are avowedly those of the Protestant Episcopal Church."* We are then in a fair way to find the answer to the question; for it is an admitted fact, that the Episcopal

* Economy of Methodism, p. 20.

Prayer-Book *is of Popish origin;* it has all the characteristics which distinguish the Papal system. Episcopalians boast that their creed is that of the Catholic Church in the seventh century.*

"The Prayer-Book was compiled from the Romish missals used in the various dioceses of that country. Indeed, almost the entire table of collects, epistles, and gospels, now contained in the Prayer-Book, is identical with that of the Roman Sacramentary; and many of the other prayers and ordinals of the English and American service are still to be found in the modern missal. It will not suffice to answer, that the epistles, gospels, &c., may be found in the Bible. In the order in which they appear in the Prayer-Book they are *not* found in the Bible, but in the Roman Sacramentary. Nor will it suffice to say, that the last revision of the missal took place in 1570, while the Prayer-Book was established, in its present form, in 1569; so that the latter could not have come from the former. The services from which both drew were, by universal admission, extant long before either of those periods. And the English Prayer-Book was not brought to the state in which it now stands until Friday, December 20, 1661, nearly one hundred years after the date assigned. The American Prayer-Book (to overlook the later addition of hymns) did not attain its present form prior to the year 1804. But, notwithstanding these revisions, the Prayer-Book used in your communion is substantially of Romish origin. Of all the ancient collects it contains, there are but four which are not found in the Sacramentary. In your morning and evening service, litanies ordinal, and psalter, the points of resemblance incessantly, and, at least in one instance, ludicrously appear. In the

* See Dr Jarvis' Church History. Bishop Whittingham.

Bible, the 14th Psalm has *seven* verses; but your Prayer-Book, following the old Roman service, gives it *eleven!*

"Your Prayer-Book, therefore, subjects those who use it to singular infelicities. It ignobly restrains their Christian liberty, by confining their services to phrases coined by Rome. Made, like your homilies, for an age of ignorance, when ministers could not write their names, it holds the devotional aspirations of your most eloquent preachers in leading-strings, as if they were all babes in Christ. It fixes upon them the battology of the litany and communion service; the tables of 'Holy Scriptures,' with the Apocrypha among them; the calendar of saints, with corresponding festivals and fasts, some 125 in number; the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, the error of the sacraments, and the apostolic succession transmitted by the Holy Ghost. From the very fact of its origin, its language has ecclesiastical meanings, which subserve the doctrines of Rome, and which year by year are pouring converts into the bosom of the Papal communion."*

The Liturgy, then, of the Book of Common Prayer is confessedly "popish." An English lord, speaking of the Church of England, declares it had "a Calvinistic creed, a POPISH LITURGY, and an Armenian clergy;" and I will show you that your society possesses these same features.

Whence came your creed and Liturgy? Second-handed from the Romish apostacy, and is boldly marked with Popish features. YOUR LITURGY IS POPISH. The adoption of a Liturgy is a Popish feature—a mark of the beast. "But it is only a form of worship," you may say; "and it is proper to have forms." Very well; but yours, like those of

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* Letters on Episcopacy, addressed to the Episcopal clergy of South Carolina. By E. T. Winkler. Southern Baptist for Feb. 2, 1853.

the Catholic Church, from which they were copied, are *enjoined* by an inviolable law. They constitute a part of the Book of Discipline, which you require both member and minister to observe and keep in "every point, great and small." To refuse to observe them is to refuse to keep and obey the Discipline. To speak against them is to "inveigh against the Discipline," and expulsion is the penalty. By what authority have you enacted or adopted forms of worship, rites and services, feasts and fasts, which you claim the right to change at your pleasure, and enjoined them upon the Church of God, excommunicating those who will not keep your traditions? It is the popish principle which I repudiate. Who gave you this authority—this prerogative, which belongs to Christ, the King of Zion, only?

You (the clergy in Conference assembled) claim the authority to ordain, change or abolish rites and ceremonies whenever you see fit.

"Every particular Church [i. e., General Conference, for no other body in Methodism has the power, the Conference or clergy is then the Church!!] may ordain, change or abolish rules and ceremonies so that all things may be done to edification.—*Articles of Religion*, xxii.

The rites and ceremonies of the Methodist Church, then, are *purely the traditions of the elders*—"*the commandments of men.*" Am I to worship Christ with these? Will he be pleased with such worship? "In vain do ye worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," is his own reply. We cannot serve two masters—Christ and men; God and the General Conference.

But to "break the rites and ceremonies" that the preachers ordain or amend quadrennially, subjects the member to rebuke and exclusion from Christ's Church, if Methodism be a Church of Christ. What says the law?

"Whosoever, through his private judgment [here we see private judgment is not allowed even with respect to those things that the clergy may enjoin!], willingly and purposely doth openly break rites and ceremonies of the Church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the word of God [and who, pray, are to be the judges? The *very ministers* who ordain the rites! The people are not allowed to exercise any judgment whatever, but to take for granted that whatever the ministers command is not repugnant to God's word! and is not this Popery *full grown?*], and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like," &c.—*Art. Rel.* xxii.

This is one of the doctrines of your society, for I find it in your "Articles of Religion." How blindly do you require Methodists to serve you! You require them, upon joining, to believe all you *have* enacted in the Discipline, and all you *may see fit to ordain!* To believe every doctrine and observe every rite most religiously, until you enact the opposite doctrine and a different rite, and then they are as religiously to believe and observe that! This is one of the popish features in your Discipline, and a most abominable one too. Say not another word—and let no Methodist say another word—against the credulity of Roman Catholics, and their faith in the Pope and the priests, and their duty to yield implicit obedience to all the clergy enjoin, until this doctrine is purged from your Book of Discipline.

YOUR FRIDAY FAST is *another popish feature, and borrowed from* ROME.

The Pope appoints for fast days "one meal."

"Every *Friday* in Advent," &c.

To abstain from flesh. "All *Fridays.*" See Manual, pp. 29, 30.

Now turn to the fortieth page of Methodist Discipline. "It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies to evidence their desire of salvation by 'fasting or abstinence.'" Fast when? Upon any particular day? Yes, sir, upon a very particular day. "He [the preacher in charge] shall take care that a fast be held in every society in his circuit on the *Friday* preceding every quarterly meeting."—P. 67.

Law given to the bands December 25, 1744, "To observe as days of fasting or abstinence, all *Fridays* in the year."—Dis. p. 84.

But for what purpose are these stated fasts and abstinences so authoritatively enacted by the Romish Church? For *penance!* She requires of her priests to "fast oft," and if they would attain to great sanctity of life, to fast as much as health and strength will permit; and even flagellations are advised for the same end. Read the lives of the monks and ascetics, &c. Well, what duty does the Discipline enjoin upon Methodist ministers?

Fasting! "Do you use as much abstinence and *fasting every week*, as your *health, strength and labor will permit?*"!!

Now, the penance of fasting is made a religious duty to the Catholic. When he comes to the confessional, he is put upon his conscience to confess if he has kept the Friday and other fasts. He is asked, "Have you neglected to perform the penance enjoined in confession?" "Have you presumed to receive the blessed communion having broken your fast?" And how is it with the Methodist? When he comes to the band meeting, which is a substitute for the Romish confessional, he, too, is also put upon his conscience concerning the Friday fasts."

[The Band Meeting law is now repealed.]

"To observe as days of fasting or abstinence all *Fridays* in the year."

Now, these Friday fasts are enjoined by the Discipline, are among the directions given to the band societies, and each member gave "satisfactory assurances of his willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church" (Dis., p. 30), when he joined the Church. Therefore, to violate this rule is to violate his solemn pledge and vow, which is sin, or a "fault," at least. One of the questions to be asked in the "band" is, "What known *sins* have you committed since our last meeting?"

But you may say, "It is proper to fast, and the Scriptures exhort us to fast."

Grant it; but they nowhere command Christians to fast on *Friday*, and upon every Friday in the year. Nor can you find an instance where any one fasted on Friday, within the lids of the New Testament.

It is the *Romish principle* to which I object—the observance of days, and this arbitrary enactment of a law to observe every Friday in the year as a fast day, and making it as sacred a duty to keep it as to keep the Christian Sabbath. And then it is evident to all that it requires equal authority to command men to abstain from *food* one day in the week, as to abstain from *work*. God alone has the right to enjoin such a law; and for man to do it is to usurp the prerogatives of the great God.

You, sir, and your ministers in General Conference assembled, have as good a right to command the Congress of the United States to fast every Friday, on pain of expulsion at your hands from their places, as to lay your commands upon the Church of Christ, and enact that its members shall fast every Friday in the year, or by you be excluded from their citizenship in the kingdom of Christ.

You have as good a right to enact in your next General Conference that every adult man and woman shall kneel at

sunrise each Friday, and say a "Pater noster," or be banished out of the State, as to lay such a command upon the members of Christ's commonwealth. You might say, "It is but a good thing we enjoin." Grant it. It is a good thing to rise at sunrise, and it is a very good thing to say the Lord's prayer, if in sincerity and truth, and it is proper to kneel when we pray, but it is a most presumptuous act of high-handed and despotic authority for a congress of Methodist preachers to say that every Tennesseean shall kneel at sunrise every Friday morning and say the Lord's prayer. Who gave you the right to command us? Such arbitrary dictation on your part would be in violation of the genius of our government and the Constitution, and for a Tennesseean to acknowledge your authority over him, would be a virtual acknowledgment of the supremacy of your authority over that of the State, and of the United States. So the Christian man or woman who submits to such human authority, not only rejects that of Christ, but virtually acknowledges that the authority of ministers is above that of Christ.

You have as good a right to say I shall *feast* every Saturday, as that I shall *fast* every Friday, since you may grant an *indulgence* as rightfully as command a *penance*. You have as good a right, and it would be as proper for you, to say that I shall eat beef on Monday, pork on Tuesday, fish on Wednesday, and fowl on Thursday, as that I shall eat nothing on Friday. It is one of the anti-Christian preroga tives of the Man of Sin you have usurped.

What have I to do with Romish penance? and what has a Protestant to do with penance? For me or any Christian to acknowledge your authority in this thing, and to obey you, would be endorsing and approving a tradition of Rome —*penance*. Protestant penance is as wicked and anti-Christian as *Popish penance*.

Then to enjoin a Friday fast, on pain of rebuke and exclusion, is to usurp one of the anti-Christian prerogatives of the Man of Sin; and to submit to such ar. observance is a sin against Jesus Christ.

LETTER XXVII.

The Discipline—Its Popish Liturgy—Its Marriage Service borrowed from the Romish Church—The Mummeries of Rome Protestantized.

Dear Sir :—A child will possess some of the features of its mother. The Liturgy of the Discipline does possess many of the features of the Roman Sacramentary. In addition to those features mentioned in the last letter, to illustrate more fully my meaning, I take the "marriage service." From what source is the marriage service of your Discipline borrowed, almost word for word? I answer, from the service of the Romish Church. Some few of the extras of that service are omitted, as the cross, &c., and the prayers modified. Let us compare them.

Romish Service.

The priest asks the bridegroom (who must stand at the *right hand* of the woman), "N., wilt thou take N., here present, for thy lawful wife, according to the rite of our holy mother Church?" *The man shall answer*, "I will."

The priest puts the same question to the bride, and receives the same answer.

Methodist Service.

The minister asks the man, standing on the right hand of the bride, "M., Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded

wife, to live together after God's ordinance, in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?" *The man shall answer*, "I will."

The same question is put to the bride.

The reader can see that this part is much longer than the Romish service, and more objectionable.

ROMISH.

Here is the vow: "I, N., take thee, N., to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part, if holy Church will it permit, and thereto I plight thee my troth."

Then they loose their hands, and, joining them again, the woman says after the priest,—

"I, N., take thee, N., to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part, if holy Church will it permit, and thereto I plight thee my troth"

METHODIST SERVICE.

The man says after his minister, "I, M., take thee, N., to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my faith."

Then shall they loose their hands, and the woman, with her right hand taking the man by his right hand, shall say after the minister,—

"I, N., take thee M., to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to *obey*, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my faith."—Dis. pp. 151, 152.

Why, sir, omitting one expression, I far prefer the Romish ceremony to your deformed copy of it; and one thing I do know, so long as I am an American Christian, no Methodist minister shall rehearse his Romish service over me, living, marrying, or dead—if my wish is respected when I am no more. When I want to be married with a Romish service, I will go to the Church of Rome, whose rightful property it is. I will not receive stolen goods, or contraband merchandise. Why not let Rome hold and use her own Liturgy? What have Christians to do with her trumpery? I have compared the Liturgy of the Discipline with the Liturgy of the Pope only in one particular. Those who have the time can compare the Methodist service for the "ministration of baptism," "the burial service," "the administration of the supper," and "prayer of consecration," and the form and manner of ordination of ministers, inferior and superior, and the oaths enjoined, if they wish to be convinced how much of Rome they ignorantly worship.

Methodists unwillingly acknowledge the very principles, and adopt almost the very forms, in their Liturgy, that they condemn in the "poor, deluded followers of the Man of Sin."

Do you say, "These services are not operative now—they have become obsolete?" Why not then expunge them from your Discipline? Why compel every minister to whom you administer the vow of ordination, to solemnly pledge himself to observe them—to *mind*, not *mend*, your rules—to

observe every point, great and small, in the Discipline? If that minister be a conscientious man, true to his vow, he will observe the Friday fasts, according to the Discipline, and enjoin the band meeting, marry the living and bury the dead, and baptize infants and adults, and administer the supper, according to the popish Liturgy of the Discipline; and if any Methodist minister does not so observe his Discipline, he is a *perjured man;* he has sworn and performs not; he lives in open violation of his solemn vows, and is obnoxious to trial and exclusion. Do you say, "Forms are proper in the Church?" Very well. But forms that are enjoined by an inviolable law are sinful, both in their appointment and observance; for the prerogative of the "Man of Sin" is acknowledged and submitted to. To concede to ministers the power to ordain whatever forms, and rites, and ceremonies they may think proper, is yielding to them a most fearfully dangerous power—the very power arrogated to himself by the Pope. To concede to ministers such prerogatives is to exalt them to an equality with Jesus Christ, and to violate and disregard his positive commands and injunctions; to obey theirs, is to exalt them above Christ, and to say they are more to be reverenced, loved, and feared than the Saviour.

The Presbyterian editor to whom allusion has been made, shows up the borrowed plumage of the Discipline. He thinks all the improvements upon the Romish Liturgy have been made by Episcopalians, and, therefore, belong to them, and they alone have a right to complain that Methodists have borrowed their finery, to give Episcopal character to their Liturgy.

"The Discipline—Borrowed Plumage.

"Methodism is not Episcopal. What right has it, then, to Episcopal forms and orders in baptism, matrimony, the

burial of the dead, the Lord's supper, and the manner of making and ordaining bishops, elders, and deacons? All this is borrowed plumage. Part of it is unmeaning, moth-eaten finery, hung up in the Discipline, and another part the sheerest mummery. First, Methodists are not Episcopalians. What right have they, then, to '*the ministration of baptism*,' as contained in their Discipline? It is borrowed from the Episcopal Prayer-Book. And it is unmeaning finery. For what is the object of baptism? Episcopalians regard baptism as 'the only rite of initiation into the Church of God.' Presbyterians also say, it is 'the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church.' But it has no such place in Methodism. *Joining a class* is the right of admission into Methodism. And not attending class is preëminently exclusion from the Church. Well, is baptism administered to persons who join the class? No. How long may they remain in class, and have all the privileges of Methodism without baptism? Six months? six years? or sixty? How many unbaptized seekers are in the Methodist Church? Bishop Jayne says there are 50,000 seekers in the Church North! How many in the Church South? The ministration of baptism, then, in the Discipline, is borrowed plumage; and it is very much an unmeaning finery.

"Again: Methodists are not Episcopalians. What right have they, then, to '*the solemnization of marriage*,' as in their Discipline? It is borrowed from the Episcopal Prayer-Book; and it is unmeaning finery. Do Methodist preachers perform that splendid ceremony? We do not know how it may be on all occasions. But we once witnessed the celebration as it was done by one of the brethren. The trembling couple stood up. They had no need to tremble *long*. 'Join hands,' said the preacher. 'In the name of the Lord,

I pronounce you husband and wife. O Lord! as thou hast made these two one flesh, grant them thy blessing. Amen! Take your seats!' We may have failed in the very words; we have not missed the *time* many seconds. A *Churchman* would have wondered if that was meant for Episcopacy. Certainly, it was the funniest, little odd-come-short marriage rite we ever witnessed; and entirely eclipses the shortest of the short of our attempts in marrying a deaf and dumb man.

"Again: Methodists are not Episcopalians. What right, then, have they to '*the order for the burial of the dead*,' as in the Discipline? It is borrowed from the Episcopal Prayer-Book; and it is finery hung up for show in the Discipline. But in the place of it, there is, after due time and notice, a *funeral sermon*. And, be it said, this *funeral sermon*, in practical influence, is becoming like the Roman Catholic *mass for the dead*. This *sermon* is preached for the asking. And friends expect the preacher to put the souls of their dead at rest in heaven. This *sermon*, in some places, seems to be necessary to the *consummation of the funeral*. We were asked once in these very words—'Will you go to-day to Mr. ——'s *funeral?*' 'His *funeral!*' said we. 'Why, we thought he died a year ago?' 'O yes,' said our neighbor—'he died then, but he has never had his *funeral* yet!' We give another illustration, right to the point. A man had *shaken hands* with a Methodist preacher and joined class—then *fell back*—lived as before for a considerable time, and died in delirious fever, absolutely preventing all conversation with him. By request, we preached at the grave a prepared sermon with all proper and yet guarded delicacy of allusion to the dead. But it would not do at all. Months after, a *high funeral sermon was offered up*, and the friends came away with their minds at rest. This evil is not, however

confined to the Methodist Church. It exists elsewhere, and needs to be arrested. Man now, as ever, loves *extreme unction* and *the mass for the dead.*

"Again: Methodists are not Episcopalians. What right, then, have they to '*the order for the administration of the Lord's supper,*' as in the Discipline? It is borrowed from the Episcopal Prayer-Book; and is finery hung up for show in the Discipline. The Lord's supper has august regard paid to it in the Episcopal Church. It is the day of days—the time of times. But *what* and *where* is the supper in Methodism? Did any body ever hear a Methodist speak with any interest of expecting to approach, or having been at, the Lord's table? Does it not evidently fill a place in the mind of a Methodist greatly below the *class meeting* and the *love feast*—to say nothing of the *shout* and the *bodily exercise?* Does the Lord's supper occupy, in Methodist meetings, a time and place fully known to all? Is it not postponed for frivolous reasons, shuffled aside, and poked away in a corner? And when administered, how often may the elder feel "*straitened for time,*' and '*omit any part of the service except the prayer of consecration,*' that the altar and the straw may be prepared for more exciting exercises?

"Lastly: Methodists are not Episcopalians. What right, then, have they to '*the form and manner of making and ordaining of bishops, elders, and deacons,*' as in the Discipline? All this is borrowed from the Episcopal Prayer-Book; and it is not only borrowed plumage—it is the grossest mummery. Presbyterians reject Episcopacy in all its claims. But they can respect the faith of those who believe they trace prelatical mystery back two thousand years. And our *imagination* may even kindle with theirs, when they look upon the kneeling man and the mitred dignitary whose hand communicates, as they think power and grace from Christ, and Paul

and Clement, and Gregory, and Cranmer, and Tillotson, to rule the flock. Just as we can honor loyalty, or admire some noble Percy, as his heart swells, and eye gleams over the heraldic shield which has come down to him, borne upon the breast of belted earls through glittering lances, and shadowy plumes, and banners of ancestral glory. We can feel that all this is in keeping with Europe, and the monarch, and the military noble, and *the Established Church.* But we would have no sympathy at all, if we saw a Tennesseean, at a British coronation, astride an English war-horse, wielding the battle-axe of Richard, and playing the part of *champion* for the king in the gaudy show. We would open our eyes, and cry out, 'Jonathan, what business have you there?' And so, when we see strait-breasted Mr. Stubblefield, the Methodist preacher, made a *bishop* by some Francis Asbury or Lorenzo Dow, we cannot help thinking of the daw and the peacock's feathers, or other fable about borrowed honors, or of old Mr. Burchell, in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, when he said *fudge* to *certain persons* pretending to be fine ladies from London.

"And when Methodist divines are clothing one of their number with *Episcopal orders*, there is a particular thing in the ceremony worse than *fudge.* For, what do the preachers mean when they utter these words, '*Receive the Holy Ghost*,' at the ordination of their bishops? We know what Episcopalians mean. They understand that *the grace of apostolic succession is thus conveyed.* Now, Presbyterians can hardly acquit Episcopalians of impiety in the consecration of a bishop; because *these words*, as we receive them, are never used in the Scriptures but to express *miraculous power communicated by inspired hands.* What, then, is it but something akin to *blasphemy*, when Methodist ministers, in their Episcopal mummery, say *these words?*"

If all the above mummery is not binding, expunge it—expurgate these popish features. Christianize and Americanize your Discipline, f you intend to urge its acceptance, or a respect for it upon American Christians. Your Liturgy is the image of the Romish, and you thus cause your followers to worship the beast in his image.

N. B. The new Discipline for 1859, omits the blasphemous expression "Receive the Holy Ghost," and inserts, The Lord pour upon thee the Holy Ghost, etc.

The expositions of the Wheel have already saved a multitude of sins.

LETTER XXVIII.

"And there were added to the Church daily (Gr. *Soudzomenous*) *the saved.*"—Acts ii.

The Popish features of the Discipline—Unscriptural terms of admission—The Societies used as drag-nets to sweep the world into the Methodist Church.

Dear Sir:—It must be admitted that the published standards of a Church, as its Confession, Creed, Discipline, &c., faithfully represent the faith and practice of that Church. It is understood that these creeds and Discipline are the property of the public, and open to examination and criticism. Of this, no denomination can justly complain, unless its creed is misrepresented; and then correction is admissible. It is my design to state all your doctrines with the utmost fairness, and if I am misled, I charge the fault upon your own standard writers.

I repudiate your conditions of admission into your societies, provided you claim that they are *Scriptural churches.* Your conditions of admission are essentially Popish, and are indeed more objectionable than those of the Romish apostacy. Your very conditions of admission prove your societies to be no churches, in a scriptural sense.

It would be useless for me to prove, what is so conspicuously taught in the whole New Testament, that the universal condition of Church membership is personal faith in Christ Jesus. Upon a satisfactory statement of this, the candidate is received into *Christian fellowship*, and, upon a public

profession of it in baptism, into *Church fellowship.* The Scriptures everywhere teach that the churches of Christ were composed of baptized believers; not only giving no warrant for, but forbidding, the admission of any other character.

(1.) John, whose ministry was the beginning of the gospel of Christ (Mark i. 1.), baptized only upon a profession of repentance and faith in the Christ to come (Mark i. 7. Acts xix. 4).

(2.) Jesus made and baptized all the disciples he received.

(3.) He enjoined in his last commission: 1st. Preaching or discipling. 2d. Baptism to those believing; and this specification of baptism to one particular class, is equivalent to a prohibition of it to any other class.* 3d. Teaching the observance of all he had commanded.

(4.) We have the example of the apostles. The apostles preach the gospel, "and they that gladly received the word were baptized." "And the Lord added unto the Church daily (*sodzomenous*) the saved;" i. e., believers in Christ, for such are saved. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

(5.) The apostles addressed the primitive churches as companies of justified, sanctified persons: "Paul, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," and numerous like passages.

(6.) Paul distinctly forbade the Church at Corinth to introduce unbelievers (i. e., infidels) and non-believers into the Church. "Be ye not unequally yoked together [like associating in Church relation] with *unbelievers;* for what fellowship hath

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* According to that principle of common law, *Expressio unius est exclusio alterius.*

righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath *light* with *darkness?** and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel [i. e., *unbeliever*]? And what agreement hath the temple [the Church] of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, *come out* from among them, and *be ye separate*, saith the Lord."

If the unregenerate and unbelieving are to be mingled indiscriminately with the saints in the Church, and partake of its privileges, the line between the world and the Church is blotted out, and there is, and can be, no separation between the parties. But why this proof, when your own Confession rightly defines a true Church in these words?—

"The visible Church of Christ is a *congregation* of *faithful men*, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered," &c.; i. e., an association of *believers*, and of course of professed believers only. This definition is adopted from the Articles of the Church of England, and agrees with that of Augsburg, Suveland, Savoy, and indeed all the "Protestant churches," save the Presbyterian, which defines it to be composed of all believers and their children!

Your definition of a Christian Church is correct, but you render it of none effect by your traditions. Indeed, if your definition be correct, then your societies have no just claims to be considered churches. They are not congregations of "faithful men"—of believers. They are not congregations of even *professed* believers. A profession of faith is not re-

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*Is not this a good commentary upon the terms "light" and "darkness?" "Ye were once *darkness*, but now are ye *light* in the Lord."

quired of any as a condition of uniting with your societies. None of the members of your societies, therefore, need necessarily to be professed believers. They can live and die members of your societies, enjoying all the privileges of them, and never profess regeneration of heart! Am I mistaken? To the law and statute-book:

"(4.) There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, 'a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.' But wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

"First, By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practised; such as,

"The taking of the name of God in vain.

"The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein, or by buying or selling.

"Drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.

"*The buying and selling of men, women and children, with an intention to enslave them.*

"*Fighting*, quarrelling, brawling, brother *going to law* with brother; returning evil for evil; or railing for railing; the *using many words* in buying or selling.

"The *buying or selling of goods that have not paid the duty.*

"The *giving or taking things on usury*, i. e., unlawful interest.

"*Uncharitable* or *unprofitable* conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers," &c., &c.

A long list of rules for *external* observance; but "repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ" is not

once required as a condition of either joining them or remaining in them.

But it may be urged, that before one can join the *Church proper*, he must make a profession of personal faith, since the Discipline, Chap. 3, sec. 1, gives this "direction for receiving members into the Church."

"*Q.* 1. How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves into the Church?

"*A.* 1. *Let none be received into the Church until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been baptized; and shall on examination by the minister in charge, before the Church, give satisfactory assurances both of the correctness of their faith, and their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church.*"

I confess I am unable to see the practical bearing of these directions.

1. The applicants for Church membership, to be received, must have met in the class on trial for at least six months; but they are not required ever to join the Church if they do not see fit: they can simply remain *members* of the *society* by professing a desire to flee the wrath to come, for six months, six years, or sixty years, and multitudes remain their whole lives in the societies, as seekers or probationers

2. They must give "satisfactory assurances of the correctness of their *faith*." What this faith is I am not informed, unless it be the Apostles' Creed, to which they are required to subscribe, if baptized in "riper years."

3. They must give satisfactory assurances of their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church.

These are the three conditions of joining *the Church*. But is not this "Church" a purely imaginary body? Is not the member of the "society," to all intents and purposes, a member of the Methodist Church? Is he not the recipient of all its

rites (for rights it allows of *none*) and immunities? Your children were duly sprinkled in infancy, and thus given to the Church. At the first camp-meeting they attended, after coming to years of discretion, they allowed their names to be enrolled upon the class-paper as seekers—they joined the Methodist "society." They are now urged, in common with all seekers, to partake of the Supper as a means of grace—*means of regeneration!* The preacher in charge assures the seekers, who know they are unfit to participate in the sacred ordinance, that if *he* ever was converted to God it was *in the very act of eating the Lord's Supper!* They, as seekers, are persuaded to partake. Now, sir, what privilege has a member of the Methodist Church that the seeker does not equally enjoy?

1. Has the Church member been *baptized?* So has the seeker, and both in infancy.

2. Can his children be baptized? So can the seeker's.

3. Can he and must he attend "class?" So can and must the seeker.

4. Can and must he pay his quarterage? So can and must the seeker.

5. Can he fall from grace? So can the seeker.

6. Can he eat the Supper? So can the seeker (provided we admit that Methodist societies are true churches).

7. Are the professing believers—these Church members—counted as such, in your statistics? So are the non-professing seekers.

8. Do you claim for the believing Church member the right to commune with Presbyterians and Baptists? You claim the same right for the non-believing seeker!

Tell me, sir, from what immunities or duties incumbent upon a member of the "*Church*" is the impenitent or unregenerate seeker debarred? Wherein do they differ in the

sight of Methodism? Is there any office, any rite or ceremony, by which an accepted seeker passes to the degree of member in full?—any act of confirmation, or ceremony that answers to it? None whatever. Are the members consulted, to know at what point they can fellowship him as a brother Methodist? No. The preacher simply reads out the name of the seeker in the congregration as one whom he and his class-leader have decided to be worthy of the consideration of member in full! Is not this "Church" mentioned in Chap. I, Sec. i, a purely imaginary body? Has Methodism a Church within a Church?

You may know why Baptists refuse to recognize your societies as churches.

They lack this one of the essential elements of Christian churches, i. e., That all the members must be professed believers—profess a *personal* interest in the atonement of Jesus Christ.

So long as you admit and retain confessedly non-believers and the professedly unregenerate as legitimate members of your societies, Baptists, at least, can never recognize them as gospel churches, receive their ordinances as Church ordinances, or endorse their ministers before the world as legitimate Church officers. And they would be inconsistent should they do it—encouraging, as they would, the amalgamation of the world and the Church.

LETTER XXIX.

Seekership—Its unscripturalness—Its pernicious te
The Testimony of a Presbyterian.

Dear Sir:—In my last letter I urged the unscripturalness of your doctrine of seekership and probation. Contrary to the express teachings and every example in the New Testament, the sinner is urged forward into the Church, and partakes of the sacred Supper, as a means of regeneration, while the Christian is debarred from joining the Church and baptism, until he has been six months under the drill of a class-leader, and given full proof of his entire willingness to obey the Discipline, and of his perfect tractability and obedience to the rulers who have assumed "the charge and government" over him. That you may see that I am not alone in looking upon seekership and probation as both grossly unscriptural and highly pernicious, and also to permit you and the world to see in what light Presbyterians regard such practices, I submit the following able article from the Calvinistic Magazine, written over the *nom de plume* of "Reformer:"

"Our Methodist brethren sometimes tell us, that Luther, and Calvin, and Wesley, were reformers. Why Luther and Calvin were called reformers, we all understand. And these brethren tell us, that Wesley is entitled to this appellation, because that, when he came, he found the established Church of England (the Episcopalian, of which he lived and died a member), from its connection with the State, so encumbered with sinners, so much secularized, so formal, and so almost entirely lost to the spirit and power of vital Christianity, that he felt it to be his duty to attempt its reformation, and that

God so far blessed him in this endeavor, as to entitle him to be ranked among the most illustrious reformers. Without saying yea or nay to all this,

"The charge which we have to prefer against modern Methodists, both Episcopal and Protestant, is, that by their measures, or Church policy, they are fast bringing about a worse state of things than that which they tell us Wesley came to reform.

"This is a heavy charge, and, if true, ought to alarm every lover of vital piety, especially if he be within the pale of either of these churches, and cause him immediately to strike for reform.

"And I here declare, that it is more with the hope of exciting to reformation the Christian members of these churches, than with the desire of exhibiting to the public gaze their deformities, that I attempt this exposition.

"To see 'Methodism as it is,' it would be necessary to survey minutely its doctrines, its discipline, and its measures. In doctrines, the Episcopal and Protestant Methodists are understood to agree, and are Arminian. In discipline, which more nearly concerns us all than peculiarities of doctrine, the Episcopal Methodists are confessedly anti-republican—the Protestants are republican.

"Passing these, with this brief notice, it is my purpose to dwell more at length upon their measures. Nor do I intend to speak of all these. I am aiming to speak of their practice of receiving seekers to the Church, and afterwards confirming these seekers members of the Church.

"The Episcopal Methodists receive seekers on six months' trial—the Protestants on four. Both receive every body, whether saint or sinner, upon probation The Christian is required to undergo the same trial as the sinner, and to receive a recommendation from his class-leader, before he can

be confirmed a member of the Church, or admitted to baptism.

"There is no warrant in the word of God, either from precept or example, for keeping the Christian back, or bringing the sinner forward, after this manner. The practice is an innovation. In apostolic times, believers were added to the Church 'the same day' on which they believed. 'If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest' be baptized, said Philip to the eunuch. Avowed unbelievers were not added at all, nor is there any propriety in adding them now. Are they not free agents? and has not God said, they that seek shall find? 'Ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.' But when shall they find? So soon as they seek aright. 'To-day if ye will here his voice, harden not your hearts.' *Now*, then, is God's time, and by allowing four or six months to the sinner to repent in, they who do it do virtually alter God's time, and thereby assist the sinner in the soul-ruining practice of procrastination. But I am too fast.

"The time is allowed him, not so much to seek religion in, as to try whether he would like to be a Methodist. Thus, while God would put the sinner to seeking *Him*, they set him to seeking *them*. This is evident from the fact, that the Christian is required to undergo the same trial as the sinner, and that the sinner is confirmed at the end of his probation, without even a profession of religion. The Christian needed not to seek for religion, for that he had already, and the sinner is received without it. It is not a trial for religion. then, so much as a trial for Church membership, that is required of the seeker. One unacquainted with this fact, would naturally suppose, that the seeker must necessarily turn into the finder, within the time of his probation, or stand aside, or stand back; but not so—he is urged forward into full fel-

lowship (I do not say communion, for he enjoyed that before), and made entitled to all the privileges and immunities of the Church, while he proclaims himself unregenerate!

"The distinction between the righteous and the wicked is no more regarded during the state of confirmation, than that of probation. The Christian member and the sinner member are on a perfect level throughout. If any one doubts this, he may satisfy himself of its truth, by inquiring of the members of the Methodist churches within his acquaintance, and he will find that three-fourths, more or less, of the regular members of these churches, will frankly own that they never had religion. Ask not if they love God and their neighbor, or if they believe and have repented, for all this they are taught they may do, while in an unrenewed state;—but ask plumply, have you got, or do you believe you ever had, religion? Or notice, if you please, what becomes of the multitudes of seekers who join these churches from year to year, and inquire at the end of their months, if they have professed religion, and you will soon learn that what I say is true. Many of them will pass from the state of probation to that of confirmation, as silently, as unobservedly, and with as little change, as one period of time passes into another. If, however, any deny this, let me be put upon the proof of it.

"But our Methodist brethren are impatient to ask, are there not hypocrites and self-deceived souls in all churches? Yes, and therefore in yours also. But these are not the classes of persons of whom I am speaking. I am talking about that large class of persons who enter regularly into your churches, and whose presence is approved there as life members, without even a profession of religion. They have laid aside the business and character of seekers, and are Methodists; not,

strictly speaking, hypocrites, nor self-deceived, nor the fallen from grace, but simply Methodists.

"Paul asks, and we repeat, 'What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?'—an unbeliever, as the term signifies —'or what concord hath Christ with Belial?' Luther wrote to Melancthon at the Diet of Augsburg, 'I learn that you have begun a marvellous work, namely, to put Luther and the Pope in harmony; but the Pope is unwilling, and Luther begs to be excused. And if, in spite of them, you succeed in this affair, then after your example I will bring together Christ and Belial.' Melancthon failed to produce harmony between Luther and the Pope, and Luther was relieved from showing concord between Christ and Belial; but our Methodist brethren have succeeded in harmonizing the believer and the unbeliever, the world and the Church, the children of Christ and the children of Belial.

"You ask again, did not Christ suffer publicans and harlots to become his followers? and are we wiser and better than he? True, he *suffered* such to walk about after him. He only suffered this; he did not encourage them to believe that they were worthy disciples. So far from it, he frequently drove them from him, by the breath of his mouth, as chaff is driven before the wind: 'Ye follow me . . . . for the loaves and fishes.' 'My kingdom is not of this world.' 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.' 'He that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple.' On hearing such language as the above, many, from time to time, turned back from him. Even his disciples seem to have started back with the multitude, who were not called his disciples, when he called to them, 'Will ye also go away?' He made no effort to detain the unworthy. Christ's object seems to have been, to suffer as few sinners as pos-

sible to be numbered among his disciples proper; while the object of our Methodist brethren seems to be, to receive and detain in the Church as many sinners as possible. David's heart moved him to go number Israel, and God gave him, as a punishment for his ostentation, choice between war, pestilence, and famine. Are you better than David? Not so good, if the above report be true, for David sought only to number Israel; but you number the Canaanites also.

"Such conduct is disorderly. He who would please God, must not only obey all of his commandments, but must obey them in the order in which they are enjoined. There is a first, second, third, &c., duty; and he who, from dislike to the first, should busy himself about the second, would not only displease God, but would labor in vain. Especially would this be the case, if the right performance of the second depended upon the previous performance of the first. The farmer who should busy himself in the spring season of the year, in hoeing his fields, or in making motions as if he were gathering his fodder or his corn, while he had neither broken up his ground nor planted his corn, would be, to say the least, thought very much out of order. Much more so the too-hasty sinner. His first and most obvious duty is, to repent scripturally; after that, join the Church; then celebrate the sacrament of the Supper; but if he skip over the first duty, and attempt the performance of following ones, he will find himself in the awkward and sinful predicament of one attempting to do, while a sinner, those duties which the Christian alone can rightly perform.

"To encourage sinners to such a course of conduct, even *temporarily*, is extremely irregular; but to make it the *permanent* order of the Church, is monstrous. We could easily forgive our brethren for the former practice, but the latter is next to unpardonable in a Church that seems to make so

much of Christian experience, and to arrogate to itself almost all the religion that is going in the land.

"You interpose once more, that multitudes have joined your churches as seekers, who have afterwards been converted, and become burning and shining lights in the Church

"This can prove no more than that joining the churches as a seeker, is not the unpardonable sin. Greater multitudes who have joined your churches as seekers, have received confirmation without conversion, and afterwards became stumbling-blocks in the Church, over which multitudes of sinners have, in all probability, stumbled into hell. And yet greater multitudes who have joined your churches as seekers, have soon turned, like 'the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire, or like the dog to his vomit again.' Multitudes, I may be permitted to say, have been converted before they joined any Church, and have afterwards become burning and shining lights in other churches. This we think a far more excellent way, for the following additional reasons: Because,

"The practice which we are combating is fraught with incalculable evil to sinners themselves, to the Methodist churches, and to all other churches who receive to their communion those only who have made a credible profession of religion.

"1. It is often ruinous to sinners.

"When the sinner is awakened he begins anxiously to inquire, not what he must do to be saved, but what he can do to make himself better, and thereby render himself worthy of salvation. The poet has told him,

'If you tarry 'till you 're better
You will never come at all;
Not the righteous—
Sinners Jesus came to call

"This he remembers and thinks upon. God urges him. He hesitates. God commands him to submit immediately. He trembles. At this critical moment (for this is the best time to make members) a time-serving Church approaches, and proposes a truce of four or six months between the pertinacious sinner and his inflexible sovereign. Come join the Church, say they, and at the end of your probation we will receive you, whether God does or not. This is an *understood* fact. The sinner will do any thing rather than give God his heart *now*, and he flies to this relief. He gives them his hand, when he ought to be giving his heart to God, and this affords temporary relief. This, he is told, is the first step. Several other steps, seeming to rise one above another, are now pointed out to him, which, he is told, it is his duty to take. Some of these, and the most important, are, taking the sacrament, attending class-meeting, &c. The seeker sets about this service in as good earnest, perhaps, as poor Luther did when he attempted to ascend 'Pilate's Staircase' upon his bare knees, and for the same purpose, namely, to obey his spiritual instructors, and to fix up a righteousness of his own, that will merit salvation. These steps, if taken, will conduct him safely into a Methodist Church, but if God in mercy do not interpose, and teach him as he taught Luther, that 'the just shall live by faith,' and cause him to come down from his *laborious* exaltation, and cry with the publican, 'God be merciful to me a *sinner*,' he will soon take one of two directions, either of which will prove equally fatal to him. Either he will grow tired of his penance and leave the Church, feeling that he has tried it and does not like it; treat the temperance society the same way if he had joined it; for a time, during camp-meeting season, take religion by fits and starts, like a balky horse on a slippery hill, and, after a while, like the sullen

ox, refuse to go at all. This is *one* way, and the number and the name of those who travel in it is 'Legion.' Or,

"As he has been given to understand that religion is not necessary to Church membership, and as he has been 'in the line of his duty' thus far, all that remains for him to do is to persevere in the use of the Methodist means, and at the end of his probation he takes another step, and finds himself snugly seated in a Methodist Church. Preach to the *sinner* now, and you do not touch him, for he is in the Church, and in the line of his duty, only he has not yet done enough of good works to lay God under obligation to convert him. Preach to the *probationer*, and you do not hit him, for he has stood his trial and been approved. Preach to the *Christian*, and you are farther from the mark than ever, for he makes no pretensions to Christianity. Preach to the *backslider*, and he is not the man, for he could not slide back from that to which he never attained; and he holds on to his name and his place in the Church as ever. In fact, few of those who preach to such, either from shame or policy, will venture to designate them, and so they get little or no preaching. What a munition is this for the sinner! This is the *other* direction, and of all the ways to hell it is the smoothest and the broadest, and many there be who go in thereat.

"2. This practice will ultimately prove ruinous to the Methodist churches, unless they speedily abandon it.

"A visible Church is an organized body of professing Christians, that has officers and ordinances. An organized body, all of whom were non-professors, would not be entitled to be called a Church of Jesus Christ. If the greater part of its members were non professors, its claims to this appellation would be proportionally weakened. Therefore, the practice of admitting the non-professing elements is suicidal, and will speedily prove the ruin of those churches, unless

abandoned. For, so low are their terms of membership, that nothing but a general persecution, and a want of popularity, could preserve them from an immediate inundation of sinner members. Perseverance soon overcomes these, in a republican government, and when, by the operation of the seeker system, their numbers swell into political import ance, the designing and the ambitious, together with the 'drift wood of circumstances,' will flow in at every avenue and gorge every 'class.' These will import into the Church the spirit and maxims of the world, and convert it into a politico-ecclesiastical establishment, mighty to boast, and to execute vengeance upon all who oppose its self-aggrandizing spirit. For it is sinners in the different churches that cause them to persecute and sin, and thus bring disgrace upon themselves among men, and finally devouring wrath from God. Those churches, therefore, which have in them the greatest number of sinners, will be the most bigoted, the most sectarian, and the most persecuting; and those churches which invite and cordially entertain non-professors within their bounds, will be sure to gain more of that element than those who do not. When a Church is once full of sinners, it is an apostate Church, and if it exist at all, it will be with but a name to live while dead: its succession will be henceforth 'apostatical'—not apostolical. Again,

"If the non-professing element is entitled to all the privileges and immunities of the Church, it may ascend, without molestation, from the lowest to the highest grade of office in the Church. There is no obstruction to this, so far as consistency and practice are concerned. The 'circuit' inveighs against our practice of examining men on experimental religion preparatory to their admission into the Church; and consistency would forbid it from interposing any 'impertinent questions' to, or 'sitting in judgment on,' its candi-

date for orders. If he entertain 'good desires,' and express a willingness to serve God in this way, the Church has high authority for permitting it. John Wesley confesses that he had no religion until after he had been preaching several years as a Methodist preacher, had come to America and established his system of doctrines and discipline, and returned to Europe. His brother Charles professed religion about the same time. With such examples before them, and no obstacle to impede them, being allowed without religion, and without much education, to officiate in the Church, is there not great danger that those who wield the terrific power of the 'Great Iron Wheel' will, at a day not far distant, be composed almost entirely of the unregenerate? 'If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.'

"The ordinances of the Church, baptism and the Lord's Supper, must, in the mean time, partake of the general disorder. Of this we have all had ocular demonstration. We have seen the unworthy invited to the table of the Lord. We say unworthy, for such are all who are not capable of *discerning* the Lord's body. This none can do without saving faith, and this the unregenerate have not.

"Baptism, the scriptural door into the Church, is already woefully desecrated. It is administered, without discrimination, to the children of those who are Church members, and of those who are not. And yet sinners are admitted to seeker's orders, and afterwards to confirmation, without it. Multitudes of these live and die in the Church without ever having been baptized. And yet baptism is, in the order of time, and nature, and scripture, and their Church too, when they are theorizing upon it, admitted to be prior to the sacrament of the Supper, to which these unbaptized unbelievers are freely and constantly admitted!

"Such a policy tends directly to destroy the members,

the officers, and the ordinances of the Church; and thus to bring about a worse state of things than that which we have been told Wesley came to reform. The reformation needs reform, for it possesses all the evils of an established Church, without any of its advantages, and many facilities and incentives to evil which the Church of England effectually guarded against. It is so constructed and conducted, that popularity (that after which it so ardently pants) will speedily prove its ruin, unless it heed the admonition of the Saviour, 'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.'

"3. This practice is productive of immense evil to all those churches which receive to their communion those only who make a credible profession of religion. This evil manifests itself in three ways.

"1. It deprives them to a great extent of the power of doing good to that very large class of sinners who are, or have been, seekers in these churches. In general, such persons act towards all other Christians and ministers as if they felt that they had no right to preach the gospel to them. We have frequently witnessed this, even in the case of those who have received their convictions among others, and who have, up to the time of their becoming seekers in a Methodist Church, been perfectly accessible by them. The very ministers who had been the means of their conviction, no longer possessed the power of doing them good. Knowing that the seeker system was condemned by them, and probably feeling guilty for having suffered themselves to be drawn into it, they shy off, and consort with those who give them encouragement and comfort in their self-righteous scheme of salvation. They act as if their bargain with the Methodists, like a bill of injunction, forbade all process against them

by others, until time shall have dissolved it. When this happens, they are confirmed, either with or without religion, as the case may be, and are farther removed from extraneous influence than ever; or have turned back to where they were, with the feeling, that if they ever should be any thing, they mean to be Methodists. The credit system pleases the *sinner*. Still more is he delighted with the idea, that if, at the end of his indulgence, he should prove a moral bankrupt, it would be no obstacle to a further and greater indulgence.

"2. It exerts an indirect and deleterious influence upon other churches—causing them sometimes to be too hasty in receiving members to their communion. It would be strange if this were not the fact. Their work has been so often snatched from their hands before they were perfectly satisfied with it, that they have been compelled, in very self-defence, to fasten it sooner than they otherwise would have done. If in this they have erred, the guilt must lie principally upon those who have forced them to it. I say principally, for it is not right to do evil that good may come.

"3. It greatly hinders free and profitable communion between the Methodists and those of us who preach intercommunion. When we invite them to commune with us, we are compelled, by our principles and consciences, to debar from our table all who do not believe that they have met with a change of heart, whether in the Church or out of it, whether seekers or Church-confirmed sinners. This mortifies, and probably nettles, the professing part of these churches, and generally keeps them away from communion. This in turn mortifies us. And when they ask us, the case is little altered. We know that the same characters that we refused a place at our table, will be with them at theirs, and we are in a strait to determine whether to go forward for the sake

of the Christians, or to stay back for the sake of the sinners, that are made welcome there. And here is another mutual mortification, and probably recrimination, at a time when all ought to be concord and peace.

"Permit me, in conclusion, to entreat my Methodist brethren, for the sake of sinners, for the sake of Christians, for the sake of the perpetuity and perfection of their own churches, for the comfort and prosperity of other churches, for the sake of Christ's honor, to put an end to this practice."

LETTER XXX.

INCONSISTENCIES—*Admitting acknowledged sinners into the Church, and debarring for six months an acknowledged Christian from entering!—Giving baptism by force to non-believing children and unconscious infants, and refusing baptism to the professed Christian for six months!*

DEAR SIR:—I respectfully ask by what authority are you warranted to invite and urge impenitent men and women to enter the Church to "get religion"—to seek salvation? If the Saviour has commanded it, all other denominations are involved in the sin of disobedience. If it is the right and privilege of sinners, then are all other denominations denying to them their rights and privilege, and perhaps endangering their souls. Is there a passage, a verse, or the line of a verse, that gives you the shadow of a warrant? If so, is it not your bounden duty to produce it, that Baptists and others may learn their duty? Until you do this, I must, in common with all evangelical Christians, pronounce the practice anti-scriptural, as it is manifestly pernicious. It is one of the laws of the Conference—one of the traditions of the elders, making void the commandment of Christ.

But by what authority do you presume to debar an acknowledged Christian (one whom your preachers declare

was converted at the last "revival") from joining the Church for the space of six months? Is it not the *privilege*, the *right*, if not the *duty*, of a believer in Jesus Christ to confess him before men, and add himself to the Church the same day? Is not this the teaching of the New Testament? Does it anywhere require the believer to wait six months, six weeks, six days, or six hours? But does it not everywhere command an immediate discharge of duty? and do not all the examples of obedience show that it was rendered immediately on the part of believers? "And they that gladly received the word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."—(Acts ii.) By what authority, then, do you debar those who gladly receive the word among you from being added to the Church, for the space of six months? Where do you find a warrant for a practice in open war with the practice of the apostles? Where, but from the head of your Church—the congress of preachers? I propound this question: Does not the right to shut a Christian out of the Church six months imply the right to shut him out six years, or sixty? Will you say, "He is virtually in the Church when he joins the society?" But he has never been baptized—he happened not to be sprinkled in infancy, and having made a consistent profession of conversion, one with which all your preachers are fully satisfied, he applies for baptism at your hands. Will you grant it to him the same day, or the same week, or in six weeks, or within six months? No, sir; the law-book your preachers have solemnly vowed to follow positively forbids him the rite of baptism for the space of six months! Have you any authority in God's word for this prohibition? Does the last commission, the great law of baptism, place a trial period of six months, or six hours, between the exercise of faith in Christ and the profession of Christ in baptism? Do not all the examples of baptism in

the New Testament teach us that the converts were immediately baptized? How was it with the converts of Pentecost? of Samaria? with the eunuch? Cornelius and his family? with the jailor? and with Lydia? Were they not all baptized immediately upon their acceptance of Christ? By what authority, then, Mr. Soule, are you warranted in commanding your ministers not to baptize a believer for six months? Is not your practice manifestly contrary to that of the apostles? And by what authority do you drive in the face of their teachings and practice? By the authority of the Methodist congress—the preachers. If you and your ministers have a right to deny baptism to a believer for half a year, have you not the right to deny it to him for half a century, and altogether? Christ commands *immediate* obedience. You slip in between the believer and Christ, and say, "Not so; you ought and shall wait six months, and not then shall you be allowed to obey Christ in the rite of baptism, unless you satisfy my class-leader and preacher that you believe the Discipline, and will obey us Methodist preachers. You must obey us for six months, as a proof that you will evermore obey us, before we will allow you to be baptized. You must first acknowledge our authority over you, by observing one of our laws—attend class-meetings weekly for six months, and then you may be baptized and admitted into the Church!!" Do you not require of the convert open disobedience to Christ for six months, that he may give you satisfactory assurances of his willingness to obey you—obey you in preference to Christ, and your laws to Christ's laws, and your book to Christ's Book? And yet you will baptize the unconscious infant at once, living or *dying!* You have the same authority for the one practice that you have for the other. A scriptural precept or example for refusing to baptize and receive into your Church a Christian for

the space of six months, and for baptizing and receiving into your Church an unconscious babe, you will find in the same chapter and verse of God's word.

But I weigh one unanswerable objection against your practice of giving the Lord's Supper to the unregenerate and unbaptized seeker.

You invert the order of the divine law, which requires faith before baptism, and baptism before the Supper.

Calling upon a seeker, a confessedly unregenerate man, to partake of the Supper before his conversion and before his baptism, you violate and array yourself against the positive commands of Christ. To *invert* the divine order is to violate it. Christ places faith as a condition to baptism in *every* instance, for so reads his law, and there are no exceptions, and he makes baptism an indispensable condition to the observance of the Supper. No man can invert this order without a palpable violation of Christ's command, and a subversion of the whole Christian system.

Your own Hibbard has written forcibly upon this point:—

"But why may we not suppose, also, that the same *order* of duty is now binding on every adult candidate for baptism? Is not baptism binding upon us, as the next duty in order after conversion, as much as it was upon Cornelius, or the converts on the day of Pentecost? Suppose Cornelius had withstood Peter on the question of the order of baptism. Suppose he had desired Peter to defer baptism till after he had communed at the Lord's table, or to some indefinite period. Would he not, in this instance, have arrayed himself against a positive command of God? The command was, to be baptized. This was enjoined as the next act of religious duty after conversion. The time and relative order of the institution were points of palpable and direct obligation, as well as the ordinance itself in the abstract; and to

invert this order, or defer baptism, would have been to oppose the divine arrangement."

But Mr. Hibbard strangely forgets that in advocating infant baptism he inverts the divine *order*, and thus arrays himself against Heaven's arrangement! When he can prove that baptism can in any instance, consonant with the teachings of the commission and the example of Christ or his apostles, precede *faith*, then will I prove to him from that very scripture that persons may partake of the sacred Supper before they have been baptized. All Mr. H.'s reasonings militate powerfully against infant baptism.

As this is an important subject, I lay before you an article from the pen of a writer who ranks second to none in the South.

"PROBATION AMONG THE METHODISTS.

"It is a notorious fact that the Methodists receive into their societies probationers or seekers. These seekers have a six months' membership, and at the close of six months, according to strict Methodist rule, if they have not *found*, they are cut off from the society to which they attached themselves. It sometimes happens, however, that persons remain for years among the Methodists as seekers. They are not cut off when the probation term expires, but are permitted to renew their probation or to continue seekers without any renewal of the privilege of probationship. Methodist *seekers* are a sort of anomalous class. It seems that they are not of the world altogether; and yet they are not recognized as worthy of full membership in the Methodist societies. It may be they are thought to occupy a position somewhere about half-way between the world and the Church. Poor creatures! If this be so, analogical reasoning might suggest the idea of a place equi-distant between heaven and hell for seekers to go to when they die. Methodists, however, do

not believe in purgatory. These are some of the notions of the grandmother which the granddaughter does not adopt. This is well enough.

"The capital objection to the system of 'seekership' among Methodists is, that it is unscriptural. I am aware that some contend that it has the sanction of scripture. I once heard a Methodist preacher say, 'The expression, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them," justified the reception of sinners into the Church, provided they were determined to seek the salvation of their souls!' What an expositor! Whether his remarkable talent for exposition has been so highly appreciated by his brethren as to secure for him the title, Doctor of Divinity, I know not; but I have observed in a Methodist paper that he is styled Dr. ———. Well, be it so. The public are beginning to learn that among Methodists the title D. D. is no indication of more than moderate attainments in literature or theology. But to the passage, 'This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.' The Scribes and Pharisees disdained an association with publicans and sinners. They felt a supercilious contempt for such persons. When the Saviour came, he preached the gospel to the poor. He even associated with publicans and sinners that he might do them good. He reclined with them at their meals and ate with them, thus making the friendship symbolized by 'breaking bread together' subservient to the promotion of their spiritual welfare. But the man who will say that the social intercourse that Jesus had with sinners authorizes the reception of sinners into the Church is not to be reasoned with. A sensible physician would prescribe for him the application of ice-water to his feverish brain.

"I have also heard the opinion expressed by a Methodist preacher that a portion of the three thousand that were added to the Church on the day of Pentecost were seekers. He

said he did 'not suppose they were all converted. Why he did not *suppose*, he did not say. He seemed to speak with *authority*, and I *suppose* did not think it worth while to trouble himself with the little matters that are sometimes called *reasons*. What an age of nonsense we live in! That man is not under the canopy of heaven, who, with the aid of a microscope, can see in the Pentecostal narrative any thing that resembles Methodist seekership. What are the facts in the case? Peter preached to the people—charged on them the murder of the Messiah—and showed the fulfillment of prophecy in his death and resurrection. Not stopping to harmonize the divine sovereignty with human agency, he proclaimed both doctrines, letting the people know that they had *wickedly* done what had taken place 'by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.' What was the effect of this sermon? The people 'were pricked in their heart.' They were convicted. They felt deep compunction of conscience. They inquired, 'What shall we do?' Peter said, 'Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,' &c.

"Conviction and compunction are not repentance. Hence Peter commanded the *convicted* to *repent*, &c. And who were baptized? 'They that gladly received his word.' Peter preached the gospel. The people received his word—that is, they believed it. They received it gladly—the belief of it inspired their souls with joy. Those receiving the word thus were baptized. Do Methodist seekers receive the word of God gladly? Certainly not; for if they did they would, in a technical sense, be seekers no longer. A *glad* reception of the word would imply that they had found what they sought. There surely was in the Pentecostal additions to the Church no class of persons bearing even a remote resemblance to Methodist seekers. And thus the

apostolic practice on the very day when the influences of the Holy Spirit were so richly enjoyed, affords not a shadow of justification to the Methodist practice.

"A majority of the Methodists, I imagine, do not insist that there is any Scripture which sanctions their system of seek ership; but they assume the position that there is nothing in the word of God that condemns it. This principle may be very mischievous in its operation. It is, however, a principle of Methodism, as will be seen from the following extract from the 22d of the Articles of Religion, as published in the Discipline:

"'Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the Church to which he belongs, which are not *repugnant to the word of God*, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren. Every particular Church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things be done to edification.'

"'Not repugnant to the word of God,' is a very convenient phrase for those who wish to do what the Scriptures do not enjoin. A Roman Catholic may say it is not repugnant to the word of God to baptize bells, sprinkle holy water, and do a thousand such things. Episcopalians may say it is not repugnant to the word of God to have archbishops, deans, prebendaries, &c. Methodists may say that though the word of God does not enjoin class-meetings, yet they are not repugnant to it, and therefore members who wilfully neglect them shall be excluded from the society. See Discipline of Church South, p. 93. Many persons seem to think that whatever is not expressly forbidden by the word of God is

not repugnant to it. Is this a correct principle? Let us see. Card-playing, horse-racing, theatre-going, &c., are not expressly forbidden by the word, but are they not repugnant to it? The Bible does not, in so many words, forbid the manufacture of whisky but is it not repugnant to the word of God to do so?

"I think it will not do to apologize for Methodist seekership by saying it is not forbidden by the word of God, and therefore it is not contrary to it. It may be repugnant to the Scriptures, though not expressly prohibited by them.

"But I join issue with those who say that seekership among the Methodists is not repugnant to the word of God. I affirm that it is. On me, then, is the burden of proof. No man acquainted with the New Testament will deny that the members of the apostolic churches are termed believers, disciples, new creatures, saints, &c.

"Every one admitted to membership in one of the primitive churches made a credible profession of faith in Christ. Philip said to the Ethiopian, 'If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest' be baptized. 'He answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' Paul speaks of 'the profession of faith.' 'Ye are all,' says he, 'the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' Here we have faith in Christ and the divinely appointed method of professing that faith—viz., baptism. Are Methodist seekers believers? They are not, most evidently. Who has not heard Methodist preachers and class-leaders, in times of religious excitement, urge inquirers (improperly called mourners) to believe in Christ. They cry vociferously, 'Believe now, just now—nothing in the way but your unbelief—help, Lord. Amen.' Inquirers, then, Methodists themselves being judges, are not believers. But notice. Before

a camp-meeting or a protracted meeting closes, these inquirers are urged to join the society as seekers. They are urged to do this on the supposition that they have not obeyed the command so loudly thundered into their ears—'Believe, believe, believe.' Methodists, of course, believe that their society is a Church of Christ. In admitting seekers, therefore, into it, they virtually and practically say that it is right to admit unbelievers to membership in the Church of Christ. Is not this repugnant to the word of God? It is as contrary to the word of God as darkness is to light. How can the Scriptures make faith in Christ indispensable to Church membership, and at the same time sanction the membership of unbelievers? If one man is required to do a particular thing because he believes, is another man required to do the same because he does not believe? This cannot be. And this view of the matter ought to banish Methodist seekership from the world. Seekers are not believers. Those who are recognized as believers are never urged to join the Church as seekers. The inevitable result, therefore, of seekership is to bring unbelievers into the Church. This looks like uniting Christ with Belial. Horrible! It will be said that if seekers do not believe they wish to believe. Suppose that to be the case. Why not wait till they do believe? And this reminds me of what a rigid Calvinistic Presbyterian once said on his communion day. After inviting Christians to take their seats at the table, he said: 'I cannot invite Methodist seekers for these reasons: If God is willing to save them and they are not willing to be saved by him, they are rebels against him, and ought not to commune. If they say that they are willing to be saved according to the gospel plan and God is not willing to save them, that sentiment is too Calvinistic for me; and I cannot invite any who entertain it to this table.'

"The members of apostolic churches were, as I have said, called 'disciples'—disciples of Christ. The term was used interchangeably with believers. Are seekers disciples? Surely not. Disciples are those who learn of Christ. But those who learn of him first come to him. He says, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, *learn* of me,' &c. Seekers have not come to Christ. If they had done so they would have *found* rest to their souls. How, then, can they be called disciples? Disciples alone had a right to membership in the apostolic churches. As seekers are not disciples, and yet are admitted into Methodist societies, it is as clear as the sun in mid-heaven that these societies are not formed after the model of those churches.

"Again, the members of the New Testament churches were new creatures, born of God, born again, &c. Are seekers new creatures? Have old things passed away with them? Have all things become new? Has that change occurred in them which so renovates the heart as to place its affections supremely on God? It is useless to ask questions like these. Methodists themselves will admit that the new creature in Christ should *fully* enjoy the privileges of Church membership, and therefore should not be classed among seekers.

"Once more. The members of apostolic churches were called saints. They had been delivered from the dominion of sin. Being made free from sin, they became the servants of God. Are seekers saints? Are they to be classed among the holy? The 'Discipline' says, 'There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins."' A desire to flee from the wrath to come, the most wicked man may feel—and a desire to be saved from sin is a different thing from being

saved from it. To desire to be saved is one thing—to be a saint is quite another thing.

"I might go on and refer to other appellations given to the members of New Testament churches, showing that such appellations could not in truth be given to Methodist seekers; but it is needless. I have shown already that it is repugnant to the word of God to practise the system of seekership recognized among Methodists, because seekers are not believers, disciples, new creatures, saints, &c., and therefore have no right to Church membership. There are many objections to the unscriptural practice of which I am writing If it were universal, where would be the distinction between believers and unbelievers? Its tendency is to bring them all together, and in so doing to make the churches of Christ synagogues of Satan. It perverts a fundamental truth of the gospel. That truth is that the possession of God's grace in the soul is a qualification for Church membership. Seekers are induced to join the Methodists as a means of obtaining grace. They are to be baptized as a means of obtaining grace. They are to partake of the Lord's Supper as a means of obtaining grace. Thus, instead of having grace as a preparation for baptism and the Lord's Supper, they are to be baptized and commemorate the Saviour's death that they may get grace. Awful! Those who do not love Christ partake of the emblems of his body and blood! The seekership of the Methodists antagonizes with the fundamental principles of scriptural Church organization. May the day soon come when every thing so manifestly devised by man shall be repudiated, and Jesus Christ be not only theoretically but practically acknowledged as the Head of the Church."*

* Eld. J. M. Pendleton, Bowling Green, Ky.

LETTER XXXI.

The Class-meeting law—An essential feature of Methodism—Exclusion the penalty for its violation—Is confessedly a commandment of men—To submit to it is to obey and serve men—Band-meetings—Methodist confessionals—Their tendency.

Dear Sir:—The law that enjoins weekly class-meetings, upon pain of excommunication, is a feature of Methodism to which I most seriously object, as manifestly unscriptural. It is not regarded as a small matter. It is not considered in the light of a mere recommendation, to promote holiness of heart or life,—to be heeded or not as the members may see fit; but it is declared to be an essential feature of Methodism to promote the spirit of Methodism, and enforce obedience to the Discipline.

The class-meeting law had its origin with a certain Captain Foy, in the year 1738, for the purpose of taking up a weekly collection from the members, as we have seen in Letter X. Wesley, pleased with its operation, enacted it as a positive and inviolable law of his societies, and made it an *essential part* of his system. Methodist writers are pretty generally agreed that class-meetings are indispensable to the existence of Methodism, and yet are as free to admit that they are not of divine appointment.

"Class-meetings are *peculiar* to Methodism. Other churches have occasional inquiry, conference, or experience meetings. But class-meetings are an ESSENTIAL PART OF OUR

STSTEM. It s not claimed that this institution is of divine origin. So soon as we become willing to dispense with this feature of our system, our decline and downfall will certainly and rapidly follow. This is one of the ancient landmarks, and it would be *almost sacrilegious* to remove or deface it."—*Methodism*, by Inskip, pp. 192, 193.

"It is not contended that this institution is of divine appointment, or that, in the specific form which it obtains among Methodists, it had any existence in the primitive Church."—*Charles Keys* in *Class-Leader's Manual*, p. 19. This is published by the Methodist Book Concern.

Coke and Asbury, in their notes on the Discipline, claimed that Captain Foy spake by inspiration of God! They say, "But we must say, that those who entirely neglect this *divinely-instituted* ordinance—however various the names given to it, or the modes of conducting it, may be—manifest that they are either ashamed to acknowledge *as their brethren* the true children of God [are all who meet in class the true children of God?], or are the enemies of the cross of Christ." —(Quoted from "*Class-meetings*," by J. Miley, 200 Mulberry street, N. Y.) "And yet," says Mr. Miley, "we regard our class-meetings simply as a prudential regulation. Mr. Wesley himself so regarded and styled them. They are a usage which our Church [i. e., clergy] has herself instituted." —*Class-meetings*, p. 73.

Dr. N. Bond, when discussing with the Reformers, says:

"But if the Reformers insist upon changing the rule which makes it obligatory upon our members to meet in class, because there *is no positive scriptural command for it*, THEY MUST ALSO GIVE UP INFANT BAPTISM, and the administration of the communion to females, FOR THERE IS NO SUCH COMMANDMENT FOR EITHER THE ONE OR THE OTHER."—*Economy of Methodism*, p. 52.

It is worthy of notice here, that Dr. Bond frankly declares that there is no command in the Bible for infant baptism, any more than for class-meetings; and if all practices not taught in God's word are to be given up, infant baptism, as well as class-meetings, must be abolished. All Christians whose religion is the Bible, and the Bible only, as a perfect rule of practice as well as faith, will respond, "Then give it up; away with the human dogmas, and purge the Church of the traditions of men. Jesus only is our Lawgiver."

We are grieved that a man of common intelligence, and a professed Christian teacher, should say that there is no scriptural command for female communion! Could a man make a declaration that would be better calculated to excite suspicion as to his motive—his Christian honesty—and thereby injure himself with all candid readers? He might as well say there is no scriptural command for female repentance. Where did Christ or his apostles specifically call upon females to repent? He might as consistently say that there is no "scriptural command" for female baptism.

Are females accountable beings? Are they sinners? Then they are commanded to *believe*. Are they believers? Then they are commanded to be baptized, and as baptized believers to observe all things whatsoever Christ taught his disciples to observe. And did he not command the observance of the Lord's Supper? Females find their command to participate in the celebration of the Supper, where its observance is enjoined upon baptized believers—wherever it is made the duty of the Church of Christ to celebrate the Supper.

I have clearly shown that the class-meeting law is, 1st, An essential feature, or element, in the Methodist system—the lungs, in which the blood of the system is prepared and vitalized—the *heart* that sends out the life-blood to every

part, and warms the whole (?). That it is confessedly a human law—of purely man's commandment. It now remains to be shown that it is made equal in sanctity, if not superior, to any commandment of Christ; for, by the command of the preachers, the most pious Christian in the Methodist "Church" must be excluded, if he, upon conscientious principles, refuses to attend the class-meeting, and be examined by, and confess his sins to, a class-leader, even though he may have no confidence in the piety of that class-leader. That Christian's life may be blameless, spotless; he may be living in obedience to all the commands of the Saviour, but still, if he refuses to attend the class, and undergo the prescribed examination, and make confession, the Discipline commands his expulsion and its consequent disgrace. It commands his expulsion, even though it authorizes the preacher in charge to give him a certificate that he has not even been guilty of the least immorality in disobeying this essential law of Methodism.

See the law touching the case. See Discipline, p. 1, chap. IV., Sec. 3, Ans. 2.

Think how such a certificate of this sort would read.

"To ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:—This is to certify that the bearer, Mr. A., has been excluded from the Methodist Episcopal Church South, for refusing to attend the weekly class-meeting, and pass examination, and make due confessions, according to the law imposed upon the M. E. Church by our preachers, whose right it is to govern us in all things according to their sovereign wills and pleasures. In behalf of Mr. A. we state that he refuses to submit to this law from conscientious motives that are honorable to himself, considering it a human commandment and tradition of men. He feels that, by submission to this law, he would be acknowledging the authority and sovereign jurisdiction of

human lawgivers in the Church of Christ, which is contrary to Christ's commandment. Finally, let it not be understood that we consider that the least impiety or immorality attaches to Mr. A. for thus repudiating and refusing obedience to the above law; for we take pleasure in bearing our testimony to the devoted and consistent piety of Mr. A., and his persevering attachment to, and observance of, the commandments of Jesus Christ, and for this very reason 'he is a good enough *Christian*, but unfit to be a Methodist.'

"INSKIP, Clk. (Duly signed), "JOSHUA SOULE.
"T. E. BOND."

Allow me to submit a few questions for your consideration:

1. Can a Methodist say, with any color of truth, that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is his religion? Is the Bible his only rule of faith and practice, as it is of all evangelical Christians?

2. Must he not honor and observe the laws which the preachers make from Conference to Conference, equally with those commanded by Christ?

3. Do you not make attendance upon class-meetings of more importance than attending upon the ministrations of the sanctuary?

Do you not make the observance of the class-meeting law the evidence of repentance, or of a sinner's working out his own salvation? What possible connection is there between evangelical repentance, or even a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and obeying a human tradition? He is not obeying God in attending class-meeting, for you admit he does not sin against God in refusing to attend class.

But the CLASS-MEETING LAW is made the test of qualification for Methodist *Church membership*.

No one is allowed to become a full member of the "Meth-

odist Episcopal Church" until he has obeyed this law for full six months!

"How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves into the Church? Ans. 1. Give tickets [for admission] to none, until they are recommended *by a leader*, WITH WHOM THEY HAVE MET IN CLASS AT LEAST SIX MONTHS."

Here we see, by the way, how the members are attached to the wheels (*i. e.*, class-leaders) that drive them. They must meet with him in class for six months, and secure his approbation by their constancy and contributions, since it is upon his recommendation that they are to be admitted to full membership in the "Church."

We see also, that, according to the Discipline, whatever the qualifications of an applicant may be, he is refused admission into the Church of Jesus Christ (if the Methodist Episcopal Church be a Church of Christ), until he or she has attended a Methodist class-meeting for six months!!!

If you have the authority to impose such an arbitrary institution as the class-meeting, and exclude all who refuse to submit to it, have you not the right to institute a "confessional," as the Pope has done, and command all your followers, men and women, to confess their sins of *deed*, and of *thought*, and *imagination?*

LETTER XXXII.

Band-meetings—Virtually confessionals—Sinful thoughts must be confessed to the Preacher—Their tendency—The opinions of Presbyterians.

Dear Sir:—I closed my last letter with the question, "Have you not instituted an ordinance similar to the Romish confessional?" The perfect submission of your members to the clergy requires such an institution.

What are your weekly "band-meetings" but weekly confessionals, where not only overt sins, but sins of thought and the imagination, are to be conscientiously confessed?

Here is the law and directions in full:—

Section IV.—*Of the Band Societies.*

"Two, three, or four true believers, who have confidence in each other, form a band. Only it is to be observed, that in one of these bands all must be men, or all women; and all married, or all unmarried.

[*Rules of the Band Societies, drawn up Dec.* 25, 1738.]

"The design of our meeting is to obey that command of God, *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.* James v. 16.

"To this end we agree,

"1. To meet once a week, at least.

"2. To come punctually at the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason prevents.

"3. To begin exactly at the hour with singing or prayer.

"4. To speak, each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in tempers, words, or actions, *and the temptations we have felt,* since our last meeting.

"5. To end every meeting with prayer suited to the state of each person present.

"6. To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest in order as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations.

"Some of the questions proposed to one before he is admitted among us may be to this effect:

"1. Have you the forgiveness of your sins?

"2. Have you peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ?

"3. Have you the witness of God's spirit with your spirit, that you are a child of God?

"4. Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart?

"5. Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you?

"6. Do you desire to be told of your faults?

"7. Do you desire to be told of *all* your faults, and that plain and home?

"8. Do you desire that every one of us should tell you, from time to time, whatsoever is in our heart concerning you?

"9. Consider! Do you desire we should tell you whatsoever we think, whatsoever we fear, whatsoever we hear, concerning you?

"10. Do you desire that in doing this, we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom?

"11. Is it your desire and design to be on this and all

other occasions entirely open, so as to speak without disguise, and without reserve?

"Any of the preceding questions may be asked as often as occasion requires; the four following at every meeting:

"1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?

"2. What particular temptations have you met with?

"3. How were you delivered?

"4. What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?"

That this is to all intents and purposes a confessional, none can deny.

It is worthy of note that the very scripture, and the only scripture that the Pope urges in support of auricular confession, Mr. Wesley brings forward to warrant the band-meeting confession! It has no possible application to such confessions. If I have offended my brother, it is my duty to confess my fault to *him*, and if he has offended me, it is his duty to confess his faults to *me*, but Christ never made it my duty to confess to A. the offences I have committed against B., nor to any mortal, the sins of my thoughts and imagination, and resisted temptations. These I am to lay before God, and from him seek forgiveness and cleansing, and grace for future trials.

The objection I have to the Methodist confessional above the Romish is this:—

In the former I am required to confess all my sins of deed or *thoughts* as particularly and rigidly as Rome requires, to a preacher and *three* or *four others*, who are not forbidden to rehearse my confession throughout the whole community Then, in return, my thoughts and imagination are to be freighted with the sins and evil imaginations which otherwise I may have never thought of, and which may give rise

to wicked thoughts and imagining which I will have to confess at the next band-meeting; for evil communications corrupt good manners. But in the confession instituted by Rome, the solitary penitent confesses to a solitary priest, who is solemnly sworn never to reveal what is told in the confessional. No mortal ear but his own hears what is confessed, and he is to give counsel and grant absolution upon the satisfactory evidence of repentance.

The Discipline requires as full a confession as the Missal does, and requires a confession of that which it implies is improper for men to confess before women, or even *married men* to utter in the presence of the *unmarried*—and from females the confession of deeds and thoughts highly improper for men to hear. If not, why must the bands be composed either of all married persons, or all unmarried—of all men or of all women?

But what are they required to confess?

1. "What known sins *have* you *committed*," &c?

2. "What particular *temptations* have you met with?" No specifications—the temptations presented to thought, though mastered and indignantly banished, must be told. If any doubt let them read the last question: "What have you *thought*," yes, even thought, "said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?" I am not only required to confess what I have said, or done, or thought, which I know to be sinful, but what I have *thought*, even if I am in doubt whether it be sinful!

Another thing remarkable about this band-meeting confession is, that the preacher in charge, even if an unmarried man, is authorized to hear confessions of this character from both the married and unmarried sisters of his charge! What if some of their stray thoughts had been concerning himself!

If I mistake, I am misled by the following duty, prescribed to the preacher on charge: "(3.) As preachers, have you thoroughly considered your duty [*i. e.*, as prescribed in the Discipline]? And do you make a conscience of executing every part of it? Do *you meet every* society? Also the leaders *and bands?*"

It is his duty, then, to meet the *bands.* He is father confessor to them. It does not make it his duty to confess his sins and sinful thoughts in the bands; if so, in what ones, those of the men or of the women? It is silent.

What husband would wish his wife subjected to such an examination as that prescribed in this confession, and what she may have done and *thought* one week, made the theme of neighborhood gossip the next?

What father would wish his daughter thus catechised by a Methodist circuit-rider, or by any one else; or care to have her head made the receptacle of all the wicked acts, thoughts, and imaginations of a whole band? As at the Romish confessional the thoughts and hearts of her votaries are corrupted, so nothing could well be better designed than this *band-meeting* to corrupt the mind and the heart of the young and old, and fill a neighborhood with gossip and scandal.

I have been told that there are few communities in Tennessee that will permit the institution of this Methodist confessional—and to the honor of the State be it said. The most awful state of things have been brought about in a town or neighborhood by the confessions made in the band-meetings.

I submit to your consideration the views entertained of your bands, and of their tendency, by Presbyterians. They are severe, but let the Christian world judge of their justness:—

"This is the GREAT DELUSION Rome has practised. She

gives the soul relief from the burden of sin by *naked* confession, and that, *not to God*, but to and through *some other being*. Rome, we know, requires in its discipline, sorrow of heart from its penitents—but this amounts to nothing in the practical working of Popery. *Relief from the burden of sin* upon *mere* confession to a priest, *is felt* by all under her mighty mystery of iniquity. The effect of this *delusion* of Rome is two-fold.

"1. *It hardens the conscience, and leads to all sin.* Confession to God, with sorrow, softens the heart, makes it meek and lowly, and turns it from sin. Confession, even to God, without contrition, hardens the heart. The true Christian himself is even in danger of incurring this guilt, and experiencing this injury. But when the confession is made to the priest, the hardening process is ever going on. THE VERY FACT OF TELLING SINS AGAINST GOD TO MAN *gradually obliterates the sense of guilt, extinguishes remorse, and leaves the soul prepared to draw iniquity with cords of vanity and sin as it were with a cart-rope.* This is the history of the heart as it has developed itself everywhere, and at all times, under the Romish confessional.

"2. The Romish confessional makes the mind *submissive to priestly control.* This follows as a matter of course. Once bring a man to believe that his eternal welfare depends upon the confessional—and that that confessional is under the control of a priesthood—and there is nothing to which that man will not submit in the orderings of that priesthood. We need not enlarge upon this position. Of all despotisms, that of Rome over the body and the soul has been, and is, the most perfect and terrible."

Here the writer refers to the Rules for band-meetings, and adds,—

"Now we affirm, that here we have the Roman Catholic

confessional in bud and flower, if not as yet in its perfect fruit. Just examine the working of this class-meeting system. The class-leader [who is the mere tool of the travelling preacher] *must see each person in his class once a week at least*—to advise, reprove, comfort, exhort—*carefully to inquire how every soul in his class prospers—not only how each person observes the outward rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God.* Again, while the class-leader is *obliged* to see each person in his class *once a week at least*, the members of the Church are under the *same obligation to meet the class-leader*—WITH THE PENALTY HANGING OVER THEM OF EXCLUSION FROM THE CHURCH IF THEY NO NOT. The class-leader may meet the members in private, or in the class.—[Mr. Wesley's works, vol. 5, p. 187.] He may ask them any questions he pleases touching their religious state. Again, the class-leader may be one of any band-meeting, of single men or married, as the case may be; and being the class-leader, he would naturally and obviously be the leader of the band, as the band is only a more secret class.—In that band *he must ask*, and each member *has bound himself or herself, beforehand, to answer*, such questions as these: 1. *What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?* 2. *What particular temptations have you met with?* 3. *How were you delivered?* 4. *What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?* Look there! *These questions do cover the whole ground occupied by the Romish confessional.* THERE IS, ABSOLUTELY, NO QUESTION, BY POSSIBILITY, WHICH A ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST MAY ASK, BUT MAY BE ASKED BY THE BAND-LEADER!! No, not one. The vilest questions to be found in Dens' Theology, and which the priest is required to ask, may be put to every member of a band-meeting, and they have bound themselves to answer.

"Once more. The very fact that the class-meeting is sub divided into bands of all men or all women, and all married or all single, and the pledges to make a clean breast exacted of all who enter these more secret class-meetings, is *proof positive that the most searching confession was sought to be had from every member.* Yet again, let it be noticed: This class-leader, thus empowered to receive the confessions of so many members, as to their most secret thoughts, words, and actions, is also the person who is to ask these same members for their *money* for *'the relief of the preachers, Church, and poor!!' How remarkable that confession in the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches should be connected with the payment of* MONEY!! Lastly, in this connection, it is the duty of the class-leader to meet the minister [the travelling preacher] and the stewards of the society once a week, to inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly and will not be reproved, and to pay the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding.

"To complete this perfect drill of supervision and confession, the travelling preacher in charge of the circuit appoints all the class-leaders, and changes them when he sees it necessary; he sees that every band-leader have the rules of the band; and he meets the men and women *apart* in the large societies, once a quarter, wherever it is practicable, &c.—[Dis. chap. 1, sec. 9.] From this summing up of the testimony in the case, it is plain that the Methodist Church, in its class-meeting system, *does as distinctly require the confession of sins from its members, as that thing is required in the Roman Catholic Church.*

"This position will be yet more abundantly established, by considering the lame and impotent defence made by Mr. Wesley, when he was charged, again and again, with having

introduced the Romish confessional into his class-meeting system. Mr. Wesley was one of the greatest cavillers that ever lived, and yet made the poorest out in dodging, when hard pressed and cross-questioned. He says, 'An objection much more boldly and frequently urged, is that "all these bands are mere Popery." I hope I need not pass a harder censure on those [most of them at least] who affirm this, than that they talk of they know not what; they betray in themselves the most gross and shameful ignorance. Do they not yet know, that the only Popish confession is the confession made by a single person to a priest? *And this itself is in no wise condemned by our Church; nay, she recommends it in some cases.* Whereas, what we practise, is the confession of several persons, conjointly, not to a priest, but to each other. Consequently, it has no analogy at all to Popish confession. But the truth is, this is a stale objection, which many people make against any thing they do not like. It is all Popery out of hand.'—[Wesley's works, vol. v. p. 184.]

"And this was the way Mr. Wesley shuffled out of the charge, made 'boldly and frequently,' by some of the first men in England, that '*all these bands were mere Popery.*' It was thus he trifled with such men as Bishop Lavington of his own Church, and with Dr. Erskine of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, both of whom held and charged on Mr. Wesley '*that the leader of a class acted like a Romish priest.*'

"This reply of Mr. Wesley is a mere cavil. It is frivolous, fallacious, and foolish. The *great delusion* of Rome, we have shown, is, that she has erected *some other throne than that of God*, where *confession* is to be made. Now, as to the point before us, it does not make a jot of difference, whether that *other throne* be the *confessional of a Romish priest*, or the

class-meeting system of Mr. Wesley; for, the *same actual and perfect confession* is DEMANDED at both, and it does not make an iota of difference, as to the practical results upon character, *except in degree of evil.*

"Here yet another question may be put to us: Whether Mr. Wesley gives any SCRIPTURE for his class-meeting confessional? Oh, yes. He brings just *one text* from the Bible. And that text *exactly the same one*, and the *only one* brought by the Roman Catholic to sustain his priestly confessional!! —'*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.*'—[James v. 16.] The perversion of this text, when applied by Mr. Wesley to the class-meeting confessional, is as gross as when tortured by the Romanist to sustain his priestly confessional. The true meaning of the passage is happily expressed by Doddridge —'When you are conscious of having been really to blame, do not perversely vindicate a conduct which your own hearts condemn, but be frank in acknowledging it. Confess [your] faults one to another,' &c. &c. Here is the simple requirement, to confess our faults one to another—under the dictate of conscience, in *private*, to *the individual*, and *when*, and *where, in our view suitable. An obvious Christian duty!* Now, what gross perversion of this scripture, to bring it to sanction the Roman Catholic sacrament of *penance*, in which every member of that Church is required, under fearful sanctions, to come to a priest, so many times a year, and confess to him every thought, word and act of sin against God! And we ask every man, if the perversion of the word of God by Mr. Wesley and Methodism, is not equally detestable, when they, like the Catholic, bring this solitary text to vindicate the class-meeting system—in which every member of that Church is under obligation, upon pain of exclusion, to appear before the class-leader every week, and to

submit to his careful inquiry how he has observed the outward rules, and how he grows in the knowledge and love of God—in which every member may be separated from his wife or child in a band, where all are to be men or all women, all married or all unmarried—where, every week, they are *pledged*, by order of the Church, to confess *every known sin committed since the last meeting,—to confess what particular temptations they have met with,—to confess how they were delivered,—to confess what they have thought, said, or done, of which they doubt whether it be sin or no.* What an outrage upon any honest interpretation of the Bible, to apply the text in James to the class-meeting confessional! But the class-meeting system is the Romish confessional in bud and blossom, and it was proper, therefore, for Mr. Wesley to pervert the same passage of Scripture brought by the priest, and just as the priest tortures it, *to sanction the same system of iniquity.*

"Having thus, as we think, demonstrated the resemblance between the Roman and Methodist confessionals, in *principle*, we will now briefly notice *two other points of resemblance*, as results of the confessional, in a great degree, in both churches.

"1. *The conscience is hardened by it.* Confession of sin to God, *without contrition*, hardens the conscience. Confession of sin, then, anywhere else than to God, must harden the conscience in a greater degree. Confession, therefore, in the Roman and Methodist systems must tend to a callous conscience. *And it is so.* Nine out of ten of the readers of this article will say, if they are not Methodists, 'Yes, it is true. We have often remarked *a peculiar insensibility*, as a characteristic of the Methodist common mass [whatever very many exceptions there certainly are from educational and refined associations in life]—*a peculiar insensibility to moral*

honor and integrity of character.' We have not dropped this sentence in hasty writing. We say deliberately—it is so—it is so—wide and deep—and we are not mistaken in saying our readers will respond, 'Alas! *It is even so.*' This is, in a great degree, the work of the class-meeting system of confessions.

"2. The class-meeting system, like the Roman confessional, leads to *submission to priestly control.* We see, as the result of the latter, how, for a thousand years, the foot of the priest has been upon the neck of the submissive Catholic. This is the *consummation* of that stupendous system, concentrated in the confessional. *It grants relief to the burdened soul at the confessional.* Let man believe THAT, and *he is a slave to that confessional.* And we see, in the Methodist Church, with just the difference between the results of one hundred years of Methodism, and a thousand years of Romanism, the same thing. Let men and women go into the Methodist Church. Let them believe it is the *will of God that they must meet a class-leader every week or be turned out of the Church.* Let them believe he is authorized to inquire how every soul in his class prospers, and that they are bound by compulsion of Church wrath to tell how they have observed the outward rules of the Church, and how they have grown in the knowledge and love of God. Let them believe it is their duty to submit to be divided into bands of three or four; that in one of these bands all must be men, or all women; and all married, or all unmarried; that they must meet in these bands every week and be bound to tell to one another, 1. Every known sin they have committed since they last met. 2. What particular temptations they have met with. 3. How they were delivered. 4. What they have thought, said, or done, of which they doubted whether it was sin or not. Let them believe it is

also the will of God that they meet the preacher in charge once a quarter, if practicable, the men and women apart, and make other general confession to him. Let them believe that the preacher will *give tickets to none* [to enter the Church] *until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial.* Let them believe that this leader is the mere tool of that preacher, who is one of a GREAT EPISCOPACY, *authorized by God to exert over them imperial dominion*, and, in reference to whose authority, *they have not a word to say.* Let men and women be in the Methodist Church, and believe this—and their minds are paralyzed and dumb. They are a deformed mass, with little better life than that breathed into it from the nostrils of the itinerancy. They are a Church stagnant as a pond, reflecting little else than that huge overshadowing cloud of despotism which frowns over it, and which must spread and shut out, at last, the light of heaven.

"The submission of Methodists to their ministry is, even now, lamentable and astounding. They submit to their immense itinerancy being quartered upon them like an army of soldiers, without any will of their own, whether they shall come, or stay, or go. They submit to be controlled in their reading, so that there is a virtual censorship of the press over them. They are drilled to prefer hearing some old hickupping driveler, who has '*got religion*,' to listening to Dr. Chalmers, if he is a Presbyterian. They submit to be controlled in the cut of their dress. They are drilled to extraordinary sameness in expression of face, and tone of voice. They are drilled to believe they verily do God service to be Methodists, whatever else they be—to uphold Methodism through thick and thin, right or wrong, precisely upon the principle on which political parties are sustained. For they are drilled to gather around the preacher in the pulpit, as around

the demagogue on the stump, and hurrah over the merest bag of wind, as full answer to facts and arguments against Methodism. They are drilled to believe that it is right to hate with personal, private malignity, every man who speaks against Methodism, and to propagate against him any and every hearsay gabble that may create odium, as lawful defence of Methodism. METHODISM IS TO BE SUSTAINED—and the end sanctifies the means. *This is the identical spirit of Rome.* But, like causes must produce like effects. The Methodist ministry, in its class-meeting system, *is Rome and its confessional*, and, LIKE PRIEST LIKE PEOPLE.

"We have promised to show the *difference* between the Roman and Methodist confessional. *One point* of difference will be sufficient for the present. The Romish confessional secures what is TRUE, in a great degree—while the Methodist confessional results in what is FALSE, in a large measure. This can be made very plain. For, the Roman Catholic is not afraid to trust his priest almost to the fullest extent. The Methodist is afraid to trust his brotherhood to the same degree. The members of the band, it is true, are pledged to *secrecy*. [Wesley's works, vol. v. p. 185.] But, notwithstanding, Methodism cannot give to every one of innumerable bands, the secrecy of the Roman confessional. It is, therefore, preposterous to think that any member of a class, even when he goes into the more secret band, *will tell all his sins.* He then necessarily gives a *false* pledge when he enters the band; and his *experience* when *there*, is necessarily *not true* as to what he *omits*, if *true* as to what he actually reveals. The class-meeting system, then [although not so designed by Mr. Wesley], is, in fact, as perfect a school to learn people to tell what is *not true* as any thing ever devised by the Jesuits.

"This will further appear as we now give the sum of the whole matter

"(1.) *The class-meeting system tends to make a Pharisee of the Christian.* For, when the truly religious Methodist reveals his experience every week, in which his progressive sanctification is disclosed to the class, his brethren, of course, must think well of him. And he must, notwithstanding his humility, think well of himself. Such a man will have little, peradventure, of sin in his own opinion to confess in the open class, if any in the more secret band. What next? Why, he becomes more and more confirmed in good opinion of himself, as he reaches a higher sanctification every week; while the brethren will be the more impressed by his humble look and honied relations of his triumphs over the flesh and Satan. What results from all this? Why, the man is made a Pharisee. For, no man can tell every week in public class-meetings his supposed growth in grace, his joys and raptures, and see eyes swimming in exultation, and gazing upon him in fanatical or real religious sympathy—no man can pass through such secret, insidious, constant flattery, without spiritual pride. The poor man could not help being a Pharisee, even if his whole religious training did not tend that way. As it is, there is no help for him. Every body sees it, even as he walks along the street. There is an air about him not to be mistaken, as far as you recognize him. He has enlarged his borders, and made broad his spiritual phylacteries, even if he has laid aside the standing collar and rounded front. You see it as he smiles upon you, and talks with you by the way. As he reveals what he thinks of you, and what he thinks of himself, his heart speaks out—'*God, I thank thee I am not as other men.*' No; the class-meeting never did, and never can, improve Christian character. It always has, and always will, injure the piety of the good man. The laws of human nature, however improved by grace, decide the question. And facts, every

where, in all the life of Methodism, sustain the opinion expressed, as on a rock.

"(2.) The results of the class-meeting are, if possible, still worse upon the *seeker* and *mere professor* of religion. Both these grades are induced by the whole influence of Methodism to make a false religious experience. To say nothing here of its mischievous teachings upon the subject of the evidences of regeneration, Methodism encourages its members to look for high excitement—enthusiastic joy—fanatical delusions. And now, when the truly good man tells his real experience, colored as it may be by his creed and his fancy, these seekers and mere professors will desire to give as good an experience, too, as they can; and, from the very fact that they have no religion, they will, in the workings of the deceitful heart, be led to tell what is false in self-deception, even if they do not make a *mock character* for the occasion. Oh! what facts would be disclosed if we had the history of the class-meeting from the beginning! Alas! what will be the revelations of the last day!

"(3.) The class-meeting confessional, if enforced as Mr. Wesley planned it, and as it is in the Discipline, would make the Methodist Church the most hideous *school for scandal* in the world. Look at the thing! Just let us suppose they have eight hundred thousand members. (They claim a great many more.) That gives two hundred thousand bands of four members each. So, we may say, for round count, fifty thousand bands of *married men*, fifty thousand bands of *married women*, fifty thousand bands of *unmarried men*, and a many of *unmarried women!* Two hundred thousand confessionals in active operation every Sabbath day, in which every married man in the Methodist Church would be telling to other married men all his sins and temptations, and all he had said thought, or done, that was of doubtful morality;

and every married woman earnest at the same thing, and every young man and every girl! Why, Satan himself never, even in Romanism, invented a system more certain to produce a lax morality. Let people talk about sin habitually, especially secret thoughts and emotions, as a prescribed round of duty, whether at the Roman confessional, or in the Methodist class or band-meeting, or in a McDowel New York Moral Reform Association, or anywhere else, and you break down the natural barriers God has erected in the instinctive shame of human nature, to say nothing of quenching the Spirit. '*Sin lieth at the door,*' and under such invitation, must and will come in.

"We repeat, what a *school for scandal* the Methodist Church would be, if the class-meeting system could be made perfect in its motion under the action of the Great Iron Wheel!

"Here we may remark, that the class-meeting was most complete in its operation under the control of Mr. Wesley himself. Yet, enthusiastic and fanatical as he was, he seems to have felt, without knowing the cause, the mischievous working of his system. He remarks: 'The world say, *the Methodists* are *no better than other people.* This is not true. But it is nearer the truth than we are willing to believe. For personal religion, either towards God or man, is *amazingly superficial* among us. How little faith! How little communion with God! How little brotherly love! What continual judging of one another! *What gossipping, evil-speaking, talebearing!* WHAT WANT OF MORAL HONESTY! To instance only one or two particulars,— who does as he would be done by, in buying and selling, particularly in selling horses? Write him a knave that does not. *And the Methodist knave is the worst of all knaves.* Family religion is shamefully wanting, and almost in every branch.'— *Wesley's Works,* vol. v. p. 213.

'What a commentary is this upon Mr. Wesley's class-meeting system of weekly drill and confession of sins! What a picture of Methodism! And the picture drawn by Mr. Wesley himself! Shall any dare blame us if we say Mr. Wesley has drawn a true picture of Methodism? And we ask another question,—Can Methodism, in its results, ever exhibit any better picture than this drawn by Mr. Wesley?

"It is, then, the solemn duty of every lover of civil and religious liberty, to examine the Great Iron Wheel; and the duty of every upright man and woman in the community to understand this class-meeting system, and say, '*Let it be done away.*' It is the Roman Catholic confessional. It leads men to confess and be relieved of their sins without coming to Christ. It hardens the conscience to moral obligations. It prostrates body and soul under the feet of an irresponsible ministry. It injures the piety of the good man. It encourages hypocrisy. It must, if fully developed, demoralize society. It is a disgrace to the day in which we live, and it is a burlesque and dishonor upon the word of God. *Let it be done away.*

"We have given *facts* and *arguments*, and if any complain that we have also spoken in some ridicule and contempt of this foul thing, we reply, that we are not careful to make any apology. We hold with Pascal in what he says to the Jesuits, and we conclude with his words, which we address to Methodist preachers: 'Indeed, reverend sirs, there is a vast difference between laughing at religion, and laughing at those who profane it by their extravagant opinions. It were impiety to be wanting in respect for the verities which the Spirit of God has revealed: but it were no less impiety, of another sort, to be wanting in contempt for the falsities which the spirit of man opposes to them. Do not then expect, sirs, to make people believe it is unworthy of a Christian to

treat error with derision. Nothing is easier than to convince all who were not aware of it before, that this practice is perfectly just; that it is common with the fathers of the Church; and that it is sanctioned by the Scripture, by the example of the best of saints, and even by that of God himself.' "—*Calvinistic Magazine.*

You must also abolish these laws before I can recognize your societies as Churches of Christ.

N. B. Three years after the publication of this work, in 1838, the Methodist General Conference expurgated the Discipline of that most odious feature, the "Band Meeting Confessionals." What we have said of them in this letter is now irrelevant, only to show what a Popish feature was observed and tenderly cherished by Methodists for more than one hundred years!

Who will say that the exposition of it to the public has not accomplished something?—AUTHOR.

LETTER XXXIII.

The Proselyting features of Methodism—The Influence of the Class-leader—Aid, patronage, and suffrage offered to all who will either join or groan—A popish feature, &c.—How Presbyterians regard it.

"That no man might *buy* or *sell*, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number *of his* name.—Rev. xiii. 17.

Dear Sir:—In introducing the subject of this letter, allow me to call your attention to an extract from an article which appeared in the *New York Recorder*, over the signature of "Hyeros":—

"In a late number of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, at the close of an article on the itinerancy, the following reasons are assigned why Methodists lose so many converts:

"'1. *Some were never converted.*

"'2. *We are too afraid of proselyting our own converts.* While we are standing back to let them go where they choose, our neighbors, *down by the pond*, are putting their arms around their necks, to drag them *down under the water.*'

"The author of the foregoing has advanced something which I do not recollect to have seen in print before, and I very cheerfully give him credit for an original discovery, though he may deserve little for either wisdom or verity. He makes a reflection on the ministerial management of his brethren, which I think their course generally will not jus-

tify. So far as my knowledge extends, I have never seen any deficiency in proselyting skill, or any tardiness in proselyting effort.

"The Methodist system is very comprehensive. Its 'societies' are so framed as to admit not only converted persons, but all 'who desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.'—*Methodist Discipline*, p. 21, edition of 1848.

"The Methodists have their arms open to receive those who are utterly destitute of vital godliness; such persons may be added to their 'societies;' and of such their 'societies' are, in part, constituted. Each 'society is no other than a company of men, having *the form* and *seeking the power* of godliness; united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.'

"'A company of men, *having the form* and *seeking the power* of godliness.'—(*Discipline*, p. 34.) What construction can be put upon this language, which will invalidate the proof it furnishes, that men destitute of true religion are embraced in the 'societies,' I have yet to learn; but with practical commentaries, in accordance with what appears obviously to be its meaning, I am sufficiently acquainted. 'Each society is divided into smaller companies, called classes,' consisting of 'about twelve persons,' 'one of whom is styled *the leader*.'—(*Discipline*, p. 35.) The *leader* is appointed by the minister, who has the 'charge of a circuit or station,' and holds his post merely at the will of his superior. His duties are accurately defined in the Discipline, pp. 20, 21, with a single exception, which, if added in the form following, would be a published law, which he could not obey more to the very letter than he now does, in practice, in the absence of any established rule. It is his duty,—

"III. IN EVERY PRACTICAL WAY TO INCREASE THE MEMBERS OF HIS CLASS.

"1. He should visit every awakened person he can, and ask him if he will allow him to put his name on the 'class-paper,' telling him he can at any time withdraw from the class if he wishes.

"2. In times of revival, the leader should begin with the first professed convert, and very judiciously urge him to join the class, and so with all others, where it can be done without prejudice to the cause.

"3. He may make such representations of the doctrine and practice of other denominations as will sour the minds of converts towards them.

"4. He may urge disaffected members of other churches to join the class, for the sake of improving their spirituality, and facilitating their progress on the road to entire sanctification.

"If these things look bad in print, it is certainly bad to do them.

"This extra work is usually done as faithfully as any that is required under the two heads of duty given in the Discipline. Facts will abundantly substantiate what is here said.

"Among all evangelical denominations, I know of none whose ecclesiastical polity is so well calculated to engender a proselyting spirit, as that of the Methodists; nor do I know of any whose ministers and members are greater adepts in the art of gaining adherents. By means of the class-paper, thousands have been drawn in among them, who were totally ignorant of every thing but their pretensions to superior piety and devotion. The praise of 'Methodism,' as 'a religion of love,' has been vociferated to the skies: while its ecclesiastical affinities, its 'administrative rules,

its 'ritual,' and its 'temporal economy,' have been very cautiously and sparingly brought into view, as the minds of neophytes were able to bear it. Gradually the cords by which they were bound are strengthened, until at length they are held as with a cart-rope.

I may go further, and say that, in some sections, not only will persons destitute of religion be received into the class, but Methodist ministers will urge them, after a limited period, to enter into 'full fellowship,' by joining the Church. Be it remembered, that uniting with the class is not joining 'the Church.' It is only going into the vestibule, or entry-way, while the doors of the main building are closed. None can enter the temple until they have passed six months in 'the court of the Gentiles.' They may be 'sprinkled, poured, or immersed,' at any time after joining the class; and they are expected to 'attend upon all the ordinances of God,' among which is 'the Supper of the Lord.' They must come to the Lord's table for a number of months before they are fit for admission to the Church.

"The Church, as they define it, is 'a congregation of faithfulmen, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.'—(13th of the Articles of Religion.) This is substantially the same as the 19th Article of the Church of England, from which it was borrowed; with reference to which, Wesley says (sermon lxxix.), that in the Latin translation, published simultaneously with the English edition, 'the words were "Cœtus credentium," *a congregation of believers;* plainly showing that by *faithful men*, the compilers meant men endued with *living faith.*' The Church, or congregation of believers, has no privileges, so far as I know, which are not enjoyed by the members of classes; and it may be ques

tioned whether the Church contains proportionately a less number of non-religious persons than the societies. Yet, according to the following provision, the doors of the Church would seem to be guarded with extra caution and care.

"'*Ques.* 1. How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves into the Church?

"'*Ans.* 1. Let none be received into the Church until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been baptized; and shall, on examination of the minister in charge, before the Church, give satisfactory assurances both of the correctness of their faith, and their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church.'—*Discipline*, p. 109.

"This rule, though it requires of applicants satisfactory assurance of the correctness of their faith, either does not forbid the reception of those who are strangers to experimental religion, or else it is misinterpreted by those who ought to understand it, and is, to a certain extent, practically nullified; as will appear by the following extract from the *Christian Advocate and Journal* of 1832:—

"'Cedar Creek Circuit, *Sept.* 5, 1832.

"'At our last two days' meeting, a circumstance transpired which I cannot forbear to name. After preaching on the Sabbath, I opened the door of the Church, for the reception of members; and after having observed that it was customary with us to admit penitents to membership, I remarked, that however individuals might object to this practice, I had not one single doubt but that there were numbers that would thank God in eternity, for having been admitted into the Church previously to their having obtained religion, and that I had witnessed instances of conversion while in the act of joining the Church. "G. W. Teas.'

"Here we have the declaration of one of their own ministers, that it is *customary* with them to admit penitents to Church membership. Penitents, as I understand them to use the term, is applied to all persons who are sufficiently awakened to 'come forward to the altar' to be prayed for; and, before they have 'obtained religion,' the door of the Church is open for their reception. By this common practice, *numbers have been 'admitted into the Church, previously to their having obtained religion.'*

"This does not look like 'standing back to let converts go where they choose.' But, notwithstanding their early and indefatigable efforts, they lose many converts. This is very afflictive; a pity, indeed, that they should fail to bring into their connection all who are professedly converted under Methodist ministrations. Spreading their net for all, it must be painful if any escape when it is sprung. Yet so it is. The world, or Satan, catches some of them; but, worst of all, their neighbors—who are no better than they should be—have such an affection for *their converts*, that they seize them, bear them off to the pond, and 'drag them down under the water!' The monsters! they ought to be inoculated for the hydrophobia forthwith! They would then probably not go near the pond.

"'We lose so many,' says Titus, 'because we are *too afraid of proselyting our own converts.*' Credat Judæus Apella! I cannot believe that their proselyting propensities are restrained by fear, or delicacy, or propriety; neither do I believe that they lose many of *their own converts;* nor that many of them make an intelligent choice as to what Church they will join. On the contrary, I believe that much effort is made to prejudice their minds against other denominations."

The system not only furnishes the efficient means of pro-

selyting alluded to above, to augment its gross numbers, without regard to piety: 1. Infant baptism for the children of unbelievers as well as believers. By thus extending the bounds of infant baptism, Methodists can persuade the unregenerate parents that they are more liberal in this matter than Presbyterians and Episcopalians. These children will naturally have a kinder feeling towards Methodists than towards any other people, and be more likely to join them. 2. The system of seekership is a powerful proselyting feature in Methodism. Thousands of wicked men, young and old, are induced to join the class as seekers; Methodists are careful to teach them that they care more for their souls than other people, for see, they take them right into the Church, and allow them to partake of the Lord's Supper, as a means of regeneration. They succeed most generally in enlisting their prejudices in favor of the people called Methodists. These seekers, and thousands that have once been seekers, are ready to go for the Methodists, to talk, to swear, and to fight, if necessary, to advance "the cause." Who has not seen all this exemplified during religious discussions, in which a Methodist member was a party?

But the Discipline directly offers the patronage, suffrage, money of the Methodist E. Church to those who will become identified with it, or even groan so to be.

This, to our mind, is a most monstrous feature, and most corrupting in its influence. To explain my meaning, I call your attention to the following rule:

"It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they shall continue to evidence their desire for salvation,

"By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; *employing* them preferably to others; *buying* of one another; *helping each other in*

business; and so much the more because the world will love its own, and them *only*."—*Dis.*, part. I., ch. ii., sec. 4, p. 39.

What does the Discipline say to a money-loving world? "We Methodists are a numerous, powerful, and wealthy people, and all our patronage and support we pledge to those who will belong to our household of faith, or only groan so to do. To the laboring men, wealthy undertakers of works public or private, brick-masons, house-carpenters, &c., &c., say, if you will become a Methodist, we will employ you—the Discipline requires us to employ Methodists in preference to others." A printer or a bookbinder goes to the Book Concern in Nashville, and asks for work, and the agent inquires, "Are you a Methodist?" "No, sir." "Do you not belong as a seeker—one groaning so to be?" "No, sir." "Well," says the agent, "I cannot employ you then, so long as I can engage Methodists or groaners, for the Discipline requires me to employ Methodists in preference to others." Here is patronage offered for a bare profession. The Discipline says to mechanics and tradesmen, "The Methodists have money, and will buy of you, if you will simply join the class and advocate Methodism in the community. Give Methodists your influence, and they will give you their patronage." To the politician the Discipline virtually says, "We have the majority of votes in your district, and we can make you a constable, a sheriff, a judge, a representative, or a senator. Do you go for Methodism, and Methodists will go for you."

Will business men, who are sagacious in ways and means to secure patronage, be slow in understanding this feature of the Discipline? They have no particular concern about religion, and no special preference for one denomination over another, and consequently can easily persuade themselves that it might do no harm, and be well enough or the whole, to allow their name to be placed upon the class-paper

The politician foresees that the canvass will be a very close one—that he will need every vote that can be procured. He hears the preacher read this among other duties to the society—to help each other in *business!* His business is to gain this election, and if he only could get the help of one hundred Methodist votes, he would be safe. Is it strange that such thoughts should pass through his brain? and would it be strange to find him, if not a member of the household, at least a groaner, three months before the election comes off? Alas! there is good reason to believe that there are multiplied thousands of Methodists made annually by the operation of this bribe in the form of employment, help in business, patronage, and suffrage. Can we look for any thing else, considering the depravity of the human heart, and the love of gain that is so prevalent? Look at the baldness of the proposition. The Methodist Church says to all professional men, tradesmen, politicians, and even day-laborers, "Come, and give to Methodism, to its doctrines and usages, support—to its ministers in the iniquitous prerogatives they have assumed to exercise, your influence, and I will give to merchants, patronage—custom; to doctors, practice; to politicians, votes; and to day-laborers, work; in preference to all others." I say, is it strange that thousands annually accept the offer?

But look at it from another point. B. is a merchant, and has long been "groaning" in a Methodist society,—a nominal "seeker," and is enjoying a heavy Methodist patronage, "as it is stipulated in the bond." He has become fully dissatisfied with his position in the Methodist Church—fully dissatisfied with the doctrines and preachings, and the ways and means of Methodism, which he is compelled to countenance, advocate and defend, owing to his connection with the society, or offend. He cannot *conscientiously* do so longer;

but what is he to do? He is dependent upon Methodist patronage for the means with which to meet his notes for his present stock of goods—for the bread to feed his family. The principal part of his customers are Methodists, and should he leave the class—should he cease to groan, they will cease to trade—to help him in his business; for so it is written in the bond. It is evident he must either fail in business, or play the hypocrite before God and men.

But suppose, again, a young merchant with his first stock of goods, a "seeker"—has experienced the grace of God, and with his new heart, the eyes of his understanding having been enlightened, feels and sees that it is his duty to follow Christ, not only in immersion, but in all things, calling no man master. He cannot, with a pure conscience, be baptized into the Discipline and into the jurisdiction of Methodist preachers and bishops. What shall he do? His brethren learn that he is faltering, and one of the old leaders, and his long-known personal friend, visits him. "You are not going to leave us to join the Baptists, are you, Bro. B.?" "Well, I must confess I have some thoughts of it; I wish to be immersed, by those who believe in it—by those authorized to administer it—and with an immersion into Jesus Christ alone, as my master, my King and Lawgiver, taking his word as the only rule of my faith and practice—not into the jurisdiction of men, though ministers and good men, and into obedience to a Book of Discipline." "But, brother B., do you not see what a rash act you are about to perform? You are a young man—a poor man. You have a large stock of goods on hand, and your notes are in bank, and must be met, or you are ruined for ever, it may be, as a merchant. Your customers are all Methodists—we have all been patronizing you to help you to build up a business, knowing that your influence and means would be of very

great advantage to our cause in this town and county. Now, if you leave us, and thus repudiate the doctrines of our Church, you will inevitably lose your custom, and you know what will be the result. Remain with us, and if you are determined to be immersed, why, we will immerse you."

What is this young Christian to do? I can tell you what he *did* do, for the above is a reality, not a fiction.* He mounted a horse the next Saturday morning, leaving the class, and the store, and friends, and almost acquaintances, and rode into the country some ten or fifteen miles, to a little Baptist Church that worshipped in a log house in the woods and when the usual invitation was given to any who might wish to offer themselves to the Church, the merchant presented himself, to the utter astonishment and delight of the little despised band of brethren.

What the old leader first told came to pass, in part. His Methodist patrons left him, but his trust was in God, and He raised up friends and patrons. He met his notes, and his store is still open at the same place, and he himself has for years been preaching Jesus, as the sinner's only Saviour, and the Christian's only King.

I leave the reader to think in how many ways, and in how many cases, this species of bribery and corruption may be applied. This is not an obsolete rule—it is intensely operative to-day. Examine the columns of the *Memphis Methodist Advocate* for the past two years, and there see the doctrine boldly advocated in all its amplitude, and Methodists openly called upon to patronize Methodist merchants, &c., because they were members of the Methodist E. Church, or were "groaning so to be;" and the names of Methodist merchants were published! Cannot the reader see

* If any one wishes the name of the young merchant, he can have his address, for he is still living (1855).

how a young tradesman, lawyer, physician, or shoemaker, would be effectually *starved into* the Methodist Church, or starved *out* of any county or State, were all its citizens Methodists?!!

Is it a matter of surprise that all denominations are becoming more and more clannish, and practising "close communion" in merchandising and trade? In the workings of the above doctrine a solution can be found. The merchant who sells his conscience so cheaply, or who has none to sell, is unworthy of the confidence of the community, and to my mind, the above feature resembles strongly the *mark*, and partakes intimately of the *spirit*, of the "image of the beast." See Rev. xiii: "And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, *or the number of his name.*" It sounds very much like he that belongeth to the household of the Methodist faith, or is groaning so to be!

The popes of Rome have been wont to put the above law in force to expel, starve out from their dominion those Anabaptists whom they could not subdue with torture or the sword.

"The Synod that met at Tours in the 12th century, passed a law which required all bishops and priests in the country of Toulouse, to take care and forbid, under pain of excommunication, every person from presuming to give receptions or the least assistance, to the followers of this [the Annabaptist] heresy! to have no dealings with them in *buying* and *selling*, that thus being deprived of the common necessaries of life, they might be compelled to repent of the evil of their way, and submit to the jurisdiction of the Church."*

* See Orchard's History of Baptists in every century from A.D. 33—A.D. 1800 Published by Graves and Marks, Nashville, Tenn.

LETTER XXXIV.

BAPTISM.

"*One Lord, one* FAITH, *one* BAPTISM"—immersion.—PAUL.

Methodists have two distinct "baptisms," one for infants and one for adults—A distinct and different office for each—A distinct and altogether different design for each—The regeneration of infants in baptism in all cases, plainly taught in the Discipline and standard works of the Book Concern.

DEAR SIR:—The ordinance of Christian baptism, both as relating to the subject and the action, furnishes a fruitful source of discussion between Methodists and Baptists. I do not expect that this letter will put a full stop to such discussions, but I design in it to place the teachings of your Church —*i. e.*, your clergy—in full and fair relief before my readers, and suggest the true issues for all future discussions.

If I can understand your Discipline and your standard writers—and especially Wesley, whose teachings you certainly will not deny—you recognize and practise *two distinct baptisms*, for two wholly different characters, and you teach that the *design* and *efficacy* of each baptism is different.

You hold and teach one baptism for unconscious infants and non-believing children, and one for believing adults. The design and efficacy of each is wholly different. When applied to *infants* and to children—and of what age you do not specify; it may be from one hour to twenty years, for aught

I can learn from the Discipline—you teach that baptism is for the washing away the guilt of original sin, and spiritual regeneration, and that all infants and children are actually cleansed from original sin, and regenerated in and by the act of baptism.

That you consider infant baptism wholly different from adult baptism, needs no other proof than a reference to the fact that the Discipline provides a distinct and different ritual or "order" for the baptism of infants!

If you regard it in all respects one and the same rite, why do you institute a "Ministration of Baptism to Infants," and a "Ministration of Baptism to such as are of riper years?"

The design of your baptism for both classes—from the very words put into the mouth of the minister—the prayers used both before and after the application of water—is evidently for the washing away of original sin, and the new birth or spiritual regeneration of the subject. I will, however, admit the slight difference in the case of adults upon Mr. Wesley's authority.

I here submit the whole ritual for each baptism, and call your candid attention, and the attention of the reader, to the peculiar phraseology—the language used—and let him say if it does not teach that the child (and the adult also) is actually regenerated in and by the act:

SECTION II.

The Ministration of Baptism to Infants.

The minister, coming to the font, which is to be filled with pure water, shall use the following:

Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost; I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ,

that of his bounteous mercy he will grant to *this child* that thing which by nature *he* cannot have, that *he* may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy Church, and be made a *lively member* of the same.

Then shall the minister say,

LET US PRAY.

Almighty and everlasting God, who of thy great mercy didst save Noah and his family in the ark from perishing by water; and also didst safely lead the children of Israel, thy people, through the Red Sea, figuring thereby thy holy baptism: and by the baptism of thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ in the river Jordan, didst sanctify water for this holy sacrament: we beseech thee, for thine infinite mercies, that thou wilt look upon *this child:* wash *him* and sanctify *him* with the Holy Ghost; that *he*, being delivered from thy wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's Church, and being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in love, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally *he* may come to the land of everlasting life; there to reign with thee, world without end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in *this child* may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in *him*. *Amen.*

Grant that all carnal affections may die in *him*, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in *him*. *Amen.*

Grant that *he* may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh. *Amen.*

Grant that whosoever is dedicated to thee by our office and ministry may also be endued with heavenly virtues, and everlastingly rewarded through thy mercy, O blessed Lord God, who dost live and govern all things, world without end. *Amen.*

Almighty, ever-living God, whose most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, did shed out of his most precious side both water and blood, and gave

commandment to his disciples that they should go teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; regard, we beseech thee, the supplications of thy congregation; sanctify this water for this holy sacrament; and grant that *this child* now to be baptized may receive the fulness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Then shall the people stand up; and the minister shall say,

Hear the words of the Gospel written by St. Mark, in the tenth chapter, at the thirteenth verse.

They brought young children to Christ, that he should touch them. And his disciples rebuked those that brought them; but when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Then the minister shall take the child into his hands, and say to the friends of the child,

Name this child.

And then, naming it after them, he shall sprinkle or pour water upon it, or if desired, immerse it in water, saying,

N., I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

Then shall be said, all kneeling,

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. *Amen.*

Then shall the minister conclude with extemporary prayer.

Are there not two distinct "orders," or rites? Unquestionably. Are they not for two wholly different characters — the unconscious babe or the non-believing children, and adults? Does not the infant of a day differ as much from an adult of twenty-two or fifty, as non-intelligence from intelligence—as irrationality from rationality? and so far as being the subject of gospel address and gospel motives, as a bell differs from a believer? Then certainly the command to baptize a believer in Christ—and we have a command to baptize no other character—can no more be construed by Methodists into the liberty to baptize unconscious infants and non-believing children of a dozen years, than it can by the Papists into a permission to baptize bells, asses, and locomotives—which they do.

Now, read *carefully* once more the ritual for infant baptism above, and note every word.

Does it not teach that every infant is truly regenerated in the act?

1. Are not words put into the mouth of the Saviour that he never used, in order to teach the doctrine that no infant or unbaptized person can be saved?! "Born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost," Christ never said; but, "Except one be born of water and wind he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," he did say. This is what he said—these were the identical words he used. What he intended Nicodemus should understand by them is quite another matter. You have no right, and no man has any right, to correct the diction of the Holy Spirit—to add to the word of God. Do you say there is no sense in the above expression, "born of water and wind?" As well might you impeach the sense of this, a similar expression,—"Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God ye have no life in you." Will you understand the words in both instances as the

Papists do? which interpretations have led them, as it must every one, into the dogmas of baptismal regeneration and transubstantiation—sacramental salvation. But the Saviour explained to his disciples, "These words which I speak unto you, they are spirit" [*i. e.*, spiritual—of spiritual signification].

Touching the passage in John iii., suffice it to say here, one of two positions must be taken—either that the terms water and wind refer to a spiritual agent or agency, or that they must be understood *literally*, of literal *wind* and literal *water*.

The former supposition will agree well with the true version of the passage. Ye must be born (*ανοθεν*) *from above*, not again. The latter interpretation inevitably plunges us into the unscriptural doctrine of Rome and Campbellism, and it will follow as an unavoidable consequence, that no one, infant or adult, has been saved since the words were uttered, or will evermore be saved, unless baptized. But to the language of the ritual. Unless it teaches baptismal regeneration, what mean these sentiments: "Call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous mercy he will grant to this child, that thing which by nature he cannot have, that he may be baptized with water and *the Holy Ghost*, and received into Christ's holy Church," &c? What is that thing the child cannot have by nature, unless a new birth—regeneration of heart? And do not Methodists understand by the baptism of the Holy Ghost spiritual regeneration? Undoubtedly. Comment is unnecessary. Read the first prayer: "Didst sanctify water for this holy sacrament [sounds rather Popish], we beseech thee for thine infinite mercies that thou wilt look upon this child, wash him, and sanctify him, with the Holy Ghost." Does not this mean "*regenerate it?*"

"O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in this child

may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him."

This has reference to the act then about to be performed (and also to the original practice of immersion, burying in baptism), not to a future transaction; for notice the concluding sentiment, "Sanctify this water for this holy sacrament [what does this mean?], and grant that this child now to be baptized may receive the fullness of thy grace and ever *remain* in the number of thy *faithful* and *elect* children." Can there be any doubt that the prayer teaches that the child receives the fullness of grace in the act of baptism, and by it is introduced into the new covenant, among God's regenerated and elect children?

Another passage of God's word is perverted to teach the doctrine of infant baptism, "Suffer little children," &c., which has no possible reference to baptism, as the most distinguished Pedobaptist commentators frankly admit.

Have I not put a proper construction upon the language of the ritual? I appeal to Mr. Wesley himself.

"It is certain our Church supposes that all who are baptized in infancy are at the same time born again, and *it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants* proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in an infant. For neither can we comprehend how it is wrought in a person of riper years."—*Sermon* xlv.

But to settle this question for ever, I submit extracts from Mr. Wesley's Treatise on Baptism in the Doctrinal Tracts, pages 246–259; and I quote paragraphs and pages, that no one may say I have garbled.

"II. 1. What are the benefits we receive by baptism, is the next point to be considered. And the first of these is,

the washing away the guilt of original sin, by the application of the merits of Christ's death. That we are all born under the guilt of Adam's sin, and that all sin deserves eternal misery, was the unanimous sense of the ancient Church, as it is expressed in the ninth Article of our own. And the Scripture plainly asserts that we were 'shapen in iniquity, and in sin did our mother conceive us;' that 'we were all by nature children of wrath, and dead in trespasses and sins;' that 'in Adam all die;' that 'by one man's disobedience all were made sinners;' that 'by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; which came upon all men, because all had sinned.' This plainly includes infants, for they too die; therefore they have sinned: but not by actual sin, therefore by original; else what need have they of the death of Christ? Yea, 'death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned' actually 'according to the similitude of Adam's transgression.' This, which can relate to infants only, is a clear proof that the whole race of mankind are obnoxious both to the guilt and punishment of Adam's transgression. But 'as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.' And the virtue of this free gift, the merits of Christ's life and death, are applied to us in baptism. 'He gave himself for the Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word;' (Eph. v. 25, 26;) namely, in baptism, the *ordinary instrument of our justification.* Agreeably to this, our Church prays in the baptismal office, that the person to be baptized may be 'washed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and being delivered from God's wrath, receive remission of sins, and enjoy the everlasting benediction of his heavenly washing; and declares in the rubric at the end of the office, 'It

is certain, by God's word, that children *who are baptized*, dying before they commit actual sin, are saved.' And this is agreeable to the unanimous judgment of all the *ancient fathers.*

"2. By baptism we enter into covenant with God; into that everlasting covenant, which he hath commanded for ever; (Psalm cxi. 9;) that new covenant, which he promised to make with the spiritual Israel; even to 'give them a new heart and a new spirit, to sprinkle clean water upon them' (of which the baptismal is only a figure), 'and to remember their sins and iniquities no more;' in a word, to be their God, as he promised to Abraham, in the evangelical covenant which he made with him and all his spiritual offspring. (Gen. xxii. 7, 8.) And as circumcision was then the way of entering into this covenant, so baptism is now; which is therefore styled by the apostle (so many good interpreters render his words), 'the stipulation, contract, or covenant of a good conscience with God.'

"3. By baptism we are admitted into the Church, and consequently made members of Christ, its head. The Jews were admitted into the Church by circumcision, so are the Christians by baptism. For 'as many as are baptized into Christ,' in his name, 'have' thereby 'put on Christ,' (Gal. iii. 27,) that is, are mystically united to Christ, and made one with him. For, 'by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body,' (1 Cor. xii. 13,) namely, the Church, 'the body of Christ.' (Eph. iv. 12.) From which spiritual, vital union with him, proceeds the influence of his grace on those that are baptized; as from our union with the Church, a share in all its privileges, and in all the promises Christ has made to it.

"4. By baptism, we who were 'by nature children of wrath,' are made the childrer of God. And this regenera-

tion which our Church in so many places ascribes to baptism is more than barely being admitted into the Church, though commonly connected therewith; being 'grafted into the body of Christ's Church, we are made the children of God by adoption and grace.' This is grounded on the plain words of our Lord, 'Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' (John iii. 5.) By water then, as a means—the water of baptism—we are regenerated or born again; whence it is also called by the apostle, 'the washing of regeneration.' Our Church therefore ascribes no greater virtue to baptism than Christ himself has done. Nor does she ascribe it to the outward washing, but to the inward grace, which, added thereto, makes it a sacrament. Herein a principle of grace is infused, which will not be wholly taken away, unless we quench the Holy Spirit of God by long-continued wickedness.

"5. In consequence of our being made children of God, we are heirs of the kingdom of heaven. 'If children' (as the apostle observes) 'then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.' Herein we receive a title to, and an earnest of, 'a kingdom which cannot be moved.' Baptism doth now save us, if we live answerable thereto; if we repent, believe, and obey the Gospel: supposing this, as it admits us into the Church here, so into glory hereafter.

"III. 1. But did our Saviour design this should remain always in his Church? This is the third thing we are to consider. And this may be despatched in a few words, since there can be no reasonable doubt, but it was intended to last as long as the Church into which it is the appointed means of entering. In the ordinary way there is no other means of entering into the Church or into Heaven.

"2. In all ages, the outward baptism is a means of the 'nward; as outward circumcision was of the circumcision of

the heart. Nor would it have availed a Jew to say, 'I have the inward circumcision, and therefore do not need the outward too:' that soul was to be cut off from his people. He had despised, he had broken God's everlasting covenant, by despising the seal of it. (Gen. xvii. 14.) Now, the seal of circumcision was to last among the Jews as long as the law lasted, to which it obliged them. By plain parity of reason, baptism, which came in its room, must last among Christians as long as the Gospel covenant into which it admits, and whereunto it obliges all nations."

"VI. 1. But the grand question is, Who are the proper subjects of baptism—grown persons only, or infants also? In order to answer this fully, I shall, first, lay down the grounds of infant baptism, taken from Scripture, reason, and primitive, universal practice; and secondly, answer the objections against it.

"2. As to the ground of it: If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism; seeing, in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism. It has been already proved, that this original stain cleaves to every child of man; and that hereby they are children of wrath, and liable to eternal damnation. It is true, the Second Adam has found a remedy for the disease which came upon all by the offence of the first. But the benefit of this is to be received through the means which he hath appointed; through baptism in particular, which is the ordinary means he hath appointed for that purpose; and to which God hath tied us, though he may not have tied himself. Indeed, where it cannot be had, the case is different; but extraordinary cases do not make void a standing rule. This, therefore, is our first ground. Infants need to be washed from original sin; therefore they are proper subjects of baptism.'

"10. To sum up the evidence; If outward baptism be generally, in an ordinary way, necessary to salvation, and infants may be saved as well as adults, nor ought we to neglect any means of saving them." &c.

Comment upon the above extracts is unnecessary; the doctrine of baptismal regeneration runs through every line, and imbues the whole. The Roman Catholic Church, or Mr. A. Campbell, or Mr. Pusey, never advocated the dogma in stronger or more explicit terms. Those extracts, like the teachings of the ritual, are a mass of doctrinal corruption and putrefaction. Call you such sentiments *Protestantism?* Call you such teachings *evangelical?* Call you such doctrine *Christianity?* They are the inversion and perversion of Christianity.

Can it be longer denied by an honest man, that the Methodist Church teaches that infants and children are not only really regenerated, and made the children of God by and in baptism, but that, monstrous to say, *ordinarily all infants and children dying unbaptized are lost!* What says the Church? "If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism; SEEING IN THE ORDINARY WAY THEY CANNOT BE SAVED UNLESS *this be washed* AWAY.

Two remarks here, before passing to the second baptism.

1. We see why Methodists are so anxious to have their sick and dying, I had almost said dead, infants sprinkled. They have been known to send for the preacher, to come at midnight through darkness and storm, and for miles, to sprinkle the infant when its death-rattle mingled with the popish mummery of the ritual! And is this *Protestantism?* Is it not more like *papism?* I ask it in kindness—in sorrow and heartfelt grief. Infant regeneration and salvation underlie infant rites in every community; the operation is a solmn farce, unless there is some efficacy attached.

2. Methodists are the last people in the world who should impute to Baptists the sin of making too much of baptism —of teaching that no one can be saved without baptism? It is the thief's cry with them. They do it to divert attention from the ground they occupy.

3. Methodists may say that the above teachings are not now the teachings of their "Church." I reply,

1. They were Mr. Wesley's teachings, who is the boasted father of all Methodists.

2. They are the teachings of the Discipline, which is the only supreme standard of faith and practice acknowledged by the "Church."

3. The books that contain them (Wesley's Sermons and Doctrinal Tracts) have been published yearly by the Book Concern, under the direction of the General Conference since the days of Wesley; and I copied the above extracts in the "Concern" itself, so that there might be no mistake.

4. I could submit other standard authorities published annually by the Concern, were it necessary.

Through her Discipline and the books she publishes does she only teach authoritatively and unmistakably

The above is one baptism and its design.

LETTER XXXV.

ADULT BAPTISM *distinct from infant—Its design, with the exception—No faith required of the adult, save that required by the Romish Church—And no profession of regeneration as a condition of baptism—Regeneration ordinarily the same with baptism.*

DEAR SIR:—Having considered the teachings of your Church touching infant baptism, I now wish to show that adult baptism is a different ordinance from infant baptism. The subject is altogether different. This is the baptism of a moral agent; that, of a subject to which the terms "moral" and "agent" cannot be sensibly applied. This is the baptism of an intelligent rational creature; that, of a creature to which these terms are inapplicable. This, of a believer (though the office does not intimate it, save that he believes the Catholic Creed, adopted at the Council of Nice); that, of a non-believer. This, of a subject of gospel address; that, of a subject nowhere addressed in the gospel, or commanded either to believe or be baptized. For adult baptism the Discipline enjoins the use of a different ritual. In this "order" the candidate is questioned, and is called upon to repeat the Creed. In infant baptism no questions are asked, though they used to be put to the sponsors—the godfathers and godmothers who answered for the child!

Baptism is administered to both the adult and infant subject with the same design, *i. e.*, to wash away original sin and regenerate the heart, with this solitary exception, that

in the case of the infant subject regeneration always takes place in connection with the act, while in the case of the adult it is *uncertain*. It ordinarily does best, nevertheless, if the subject is a pretty hard case. The result is extremely *problematical*. I submit the formula for the baptism of adults.

The opening remarks are, with a few unimportant words, the same, and I omit them.

"*Then shall the minister say*,

"Almighty and immortal God, the aid of all that need, the helper of all that flee to thee for succor, the life of them that believe, and the resurrection of the dead: we call upon thee for *these persons*; that *they*, coming to thy holy baptism, may receive remission of *their sins*, by spiritual regeneration. Receive *them*, O Lord, as thou hast promised by thy well-beloved Son, saying, Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: so give now unto us that ask; let us that seek, find; open the gate unto us that knock: that *these persons* may enjoy the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing, and may come to the eternal kingdom which thou hast promised by Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

After which he shall say,

"Almighty and everlasting God, heavenly Father, we give thee humble thanks, for that thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of thy grace, and faith in thee; increase this knowledge and confirm this faith in us evermore. Give thy Holy Spirit to *these persons*, that *they* may be born again, and be made *heirs* of everlasting salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Then shall the people stand up, and the minister shall say,

Hear the words of the Gospel, written by St. John, in the third chapter, beginning at the first verse.

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a

ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Then the minister shall speak to the persons *to be baptized on this wise:—*

"Well beloved, who *are* come hither, desiring to receive holy baptism, *ye* have heard how the congregation hath prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive you, and bless you, to release you of your sins, to give you the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting life. And our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised, in his holy word, to grant all those things that we have prayed for: which promise he for his part will most surely keep and perform.

"Wherefore after this promise made by Christ, *you* must also faithfully, for *your* part, promise, in the presence of this whole congregation, that you will renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's holy word, and obediently keep his commandments.

Then shall the minister demand of each of the persons to be baptized, severally,

Q. Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow or be led by them?

A. I renounce them all.

Q. Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth? and in Jesus Christ his only-begotten son our Lord? and that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary? that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; that he rose again the third day; that he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and from thence shall come again, at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead?

And dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints; the remission of sins; the resurrection of the body, and everlasting life after death?

A. All this I steadfastly believe.

Q. Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?

A. This is my desire.

Q. Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?

A. I will endeavor so to do, God being my helper.

Then shall the minister say,

"O merciful God, grant that the old Adam *in these persons* may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in *them. Amen.*

"Grant that all carnal affections may die in *them,* and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in *them. Amen.*

"Grant that *they* may have power and strength to have victory, and triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh. *Amen.*

"Grant that *they* being here dedicated to thee by our office and ministry, may also be endued with heavenly virtues, and everlastingly rewarded, through thy mercy, O blessed Lord God, who dost live and govern all things, world without end. *Amen.*

"Almighty, ever-living God, whose most dearly-beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, did shed out of his most precious side both water and blood; and

gave commandment to his disciples that they should go teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: regard, we beseech thee, the supplications of this congregation; and grant that the *persons* now to be baptized may receive the fullness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Then shall the minister take each person to be baptized by the right hand: and placing him conveniently by the font, according to his discretion, shall ask the name; and then shall sprinkle or pour water upon him (or if he shall desire it, shall immerse him in water), saying,

N., I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer, all kneeling.

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven: give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. *Amen.*

[*Then let the minister conclude with extemporary prayer.*]

Does not this "whole office" proceed upon the supposition that baptism is for the spiritual regeneration of the adult subject, as well as of the infant? *Is a profession of regeneration required of the adult, as a condition of baptism?* Mark this question well, read over the whole ritual, and see if it is anywhere intimated as necessary? The declaration will be considered extravagant—preposterous, that the Methodist Episcopal Church does not require of adults a profession of either evangelical faith in Christ, or regeneration of heart as conditions of baptism! It requires a profession of *a faith,* I confess, but what kind of faith? *Identically the same,* with the

exception of four words, *and none other, that the Church of Rome requires of her subjects!* I know there are thousands who would not believe this upon the assertion of any man unless a bishop, and I submit it. Here it is—I take it from the Golden Manual of the Romish Church. The book is stamped with three sacred crosses.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son our Lord; and that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; that he rose again the third day; that he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and from thence shall come again, at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the remission of sins; the resurrection of the body; and everlasting life after death."

The four words are, "he descended into hell." The Methodist Episcopal Church requires a renunciation of the devil and all his works and pomps, and so does the Catholic.

The Priest asks, "Dost thou renounce Satan?"

A. "I do renounce him."

P. "And all his works?"

A. "I do renounce them."

P. "And all his pomps?"

A. "I do renounce them."

P. "Wilt thou be baptized?" [*i. e.*, into this faith.]

A. "I will."

Compare these questions with those in the Methodist formula as given above! Are not here sufficient proofs of the popish origin and character of the Methodist Discipline? Call you this Protestantism? Is it Christianity? And am I asked to enter a "Church" in which I am to be baptized, married,

and buried with the mangled forms and mummeries of the Romish Church—the Mother of Harlots? I demand an answer to this question,—Does the Methodist Church require a profession of evangelical faith in Christ, or personal regeneration as a condition of baptism? Is not the only faith she requires identical with that required by Rome—a belief in one God, in Jesus Christ as his only-begotten son, who was born in the flesh, was crucified, buried, and rose the third day; a belief in the Holy Ghost, and in *the* holy *Catholic Church?* And only the same sort of belief in God and Christ as in the holy Catholic Church? It is painful to contemplate! What can Methodists say against the faith of Campbellism? Mr. A. Campbell requires as much, and alas! the same sort of faith required by the Discipline! I urge the candid to think of this feature in Methodist doctrine.

I now allow Mr. Wesley to explain the difference between the *design* of infant and adult baptisms.

"From the preceding reflections we may observe that as the new birth is not *always* the same thing with baptism (and Mr. Campbell maintains that it always is; and he is far more consistent, for if it ever is, it undoubtedly always is), as it does not *always* accompany baptism, they do not *constantly* go together. A man may *possibly* be born of water, and yet not be born of the Spirit. There may sometimes be the outward sign, where there is not the inward grace. I do not now speak of infants; it is certain our Church supposes that *all* who are baptized in *infancy* are at the same time born again, as it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition."—(*Sermon* xlv.) In addition to this explanation, will the reader turn back to the last letter, and read attentively Mr. Wesley's views of the design of baptism when administered to an adult, in the quotations from the Doctrinal Tracts? They

are the doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church, because endorsed by its annual republication by the "Book Concern."

It will be evident that no profession of regeneration is required of the adult, because it is *ordinarily* effected in the water of baptism!

In consideration of these teachings, can Baptists, with any kind of reason, be called upon to recognize the Methodist Episcopal society as a Christian or Gospel Church. Is it a congregation of believers, according to the definition of the Discipline, in which the word of God is faithfully preached, and the ordinances duly administered?

If the practice of Methodists is not always according to the Discipline, it is only because the preachers and members violate their solemn oaths and promises to observe it in "every point great and small," and who can tell what it would be were it not for the counteracting influence of Baptist doctrines and practice in this country?

LETTER XXXVI.

INFANT BAPTISM IN A NEW LIGHT—*Tried by the Creed, the Catechism, and the Ritual, and condemned by the word of God—Thirty untruths taught in the baptism of one infant.*

DEAR SIR:—I propose to examine the doctrine of infant baptism in the light of your catechism, your creed, and the teachings of your ritual, and show you how contradictory they are. To this you cannot object. The ritual of a religion is a most accurate expression of its system of doctrine. The pompous ceremonies with which you have invested the baptism of an infant are not mere accidents—mere fopperies, or devised for dramatic effect alone. Your prayers, and collects, and formula, are certainly not regarded by you as mere mummeries. They embody a meaning—they express your doctrine. They address not more directly the imagination than the faith of the worshippers.

It is, sir, a matter of astonishment to me, that the opposite teachings of your creed, and your ritual for baptism, have not long since convinced the reflecting of your members that the doctrine of infant baptism cannot be proved to be an evangelical creed. It hangs to your creed like a parasite—a something foreign and uncongenial to it. The teaching of your creed and your ritual are utterly irreconcilable. The creed declares baptism to be a sacrament—and of course always a sacrament, whether administered to adult or infant.

"There are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord

in the gospel; that is to say, baptism and the Supper of the Lord."—*Art.* xvi.

Now Mr. Wesley quotes, with approbation, the catechism of the Church of England, to explain the meaning of a sacrament:

Q. What are the parts of a sacrament?

'*A.* The parts of a sacrament are *two:* the outward and sensible sign; the other, the inward and spiritual grace thereby signified.

"*Q.* What is baptism?

"*A.* Baptism is a sacrament wherein Christ hath ordained the washing of water to be a *sign* and *seal* of regeneration by his Spirit.

"*Q.* What meanest thou by this word *sacrament?*

"*A.* I mean an outward visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.

"*Q.* What is the outward part or form in baptism?

"*A.* Water, *wherein* the person is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and Holy Ghost.

"*Q.* What is the inward part or thing signified?

"*A.* A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness."—*Sermon* lv.

All this is sound doctrine. I most heartily accept of this definition of the sacrament of baptism, even to its *action;* for it evidently teaches that the subject must be *put into* the water. It reads, "Water, *wherein* the person is to be baptized." But if this definition be correct, *is the baptism of an infant a sacrament?* and if not, *is it baptism at all, in any sense?*

Baptism, to be considered a sacrament, must always have these "two parts," the outward visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace signified. In infant baptism there is, I grant, the outward sign, "water," but is there the second part, the

inward spiritual grace signified by the sign? The sign is declarative to the world that there is an inward grace possessed by the subject—a work of grace wrought in his heart by the Holy Spirit. But, in the case of an unconscious infant, or a child of a few years, does this inward spiritual grace—regeneration of heart—exist? Who will say that it ever does? All children are born into the world with a corrupt nature, according to your Art. VII., which they invariably evince by a depraved life, until they, having believed in Christ, are renewed by the Holy Spirit; and who then will say that of the thousands of infant children annually baptized in the Methodist societies, one of them possessed the second and all-important part of the sacrament—the thing signified—the inward and spiritual grace, without which no rite or form of earth can be a sacrament? Then it follows that when the visible sign of baptism is placed upon such, it is a *false sign;* it tells an untruth; it tends to deceive the world—the subject does not possess that of which the sign declares him possessed. The sign is a falsehood—a cheat, calculated to deceive not the world only, but the subject himself, in after years; for when he comes to read and understand the creed and the ritual, if he believes them, if he has confidence in his parents—in their faith, if in his priest or minister, then he must believe that he either was a Christian when he was baptized, according to the *creed* and the *catechism*, or that he was made a Christian, *i. e.*, regenerated and made an elect child of God, and initiated into the new and everlasting covenant, *in and by his baptism*, according to the *ritual;* and thus by the teachings of these, ten to one that the subject is deceived and cheated out of his soul.

These are not empty rites and unmeaning forms; these words used at baptism are not designed to be mere flum-

meries and mummeries. The rite itself, and the language used, are all full of significance; they teach a doctrine, and that in the most impressive manner. When the minister declares baptism to be a sacrament in the case of an infant or child, and administers the rite in the name of the Trinity, he declares to the world that that infant or child has the thing signified—is possessed of the inward and spiritual grace, and thus misteaches and deceives the world. The world look to see those baptized children exhibit some of the fruits as evidences of that state of heart the Church said at their baptism they did possess; but, instead, they find the unfruitful works of the flesh and darkness in every instance. And more, just so soon as they have come to years of discretion and accountability—even before—the world hears *these* very *ministers* who baptized them, and thus pronounced them regenerate and sanctified in heart by the Holy Spirit, declaring that these very "elect children" are the children of wrath, even as others, exposed to the wrath of God, and calling them to repentance and regeneration! What must the world say, but that either religion itself is a farce, a hypocrisy and falsehood, or that your rituals for infant baptism are false? In either case religion is the sufferer.

How does the world look upon the man who hangs out a false sign, or sails under false colors? A merchant in your town advertises in the papers, and hangs out the sign, in flaming letters, over his store door, that he has a lot of very rare silks or teas for sale, *extremely* cheap. Customers flock in from all the country around; they enter the town and look out for the sign. They read it—

"*Silks and Teas for sale here!*"

They throng to the store, and there sits the man, and not a rag, not a shred of any thing upon his shelves! Has he not

deceived them, and will they not look upon him as a dishonest man, and a deceiver? He hangs out his sign in the papers, and places it over his door, and he has not the thing signified, and *he knows* he has it not. I leave the reader to make the application.

But you may hang your defence for consistency upon the only possible hook in the creed or ritual, *i. e.,* that the inward and spiritual grace signified is actually and in *every* instance wrought invisibly by the Spirit within the infant, *by* or *in* the application of water; for thus teaches the article:

"XVI. *Of the Sacraments.*—Sacraments, ordained of Christ, are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession; but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him."

Lest some one may mistake this language, I will allow Mr. Wesley to explain it.

"By baptism, we, who were 'by nature children of wrath,' are made the children of God. And this regeneration which our Church in so many places ascribes to baptism is more than barely being admitted into the Church, though commonly connected therewith; being 'grafted into the body of Christ's Church, we are made the children of God by adoption and grace.' This is grounded on the plain words of our Lord, 'Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' (John iii. 5.) By water, then, as a means—the water of baptism—we are regenerated or born again; whence it is also called by the apostles, 'the washing of regeneration.' Our Church therefore ascribes no greater virtue to baptism than Christ himself has done. Nor does she ascribe it to the outward washing, but to the inward grace, which, added thereto,

makes it a sacrament. Herein a principle of grace is infused, which will not be wholly taken away, unless we quench the Holy Spirit of God by long-continued wickedness."

Mark him well. "By water, then, as a means—the water of baptism—we are regenerated or born again." "Herein—*i. e.*, in baptism—a principle of grace is *infused*." ! !

Very well, what follows but that your Church actually holds and teaches the abominable doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as taught by the Romish Church? The practice of infant baptism is alone consistent upon this ground; but where is the consistency of your practice? Just so soon as those water-regenerated Christians are old enough to understand, you tell them they are depraved in heart and exposed to wrath even as others, and must come to Christ and seek regeneration! How is it, I ask, that the whole mass of your baptized children, without a single exception, are found unregenerated the very first day of their accountability?

But the catechism contradicts the ritual. It says, "Baptism is a sacrament wherein Christ hath ordained the washing of water to be a sign and *seal of regeneration by his Spirit*." Now, sir, the thing must be in existence—the contract must be written—the note must be drawn and filled—before the seal is affixed to it. Unless every blank is filled, the document, although signed with the seal, is a nullity, and the whole transaction of witnessing and signing, a farce. Then if baptism, in the case of infants and children, is indeed both a sign and *seal* of regeneration by the Spirit, unquestionably that regeneration must exist—the *heart* of every infant and child to which baptism is administered, must be spiritually regenerated before the *seal*—the water—is applied, or the transaction is a solemn farce, and infant baptism a *false paper*.

I confess my utter inability to see how a thing—a transaction—can be a sign and a seal, and *produce the thing signified*, at one and the same time. Affixing the seal of the state to a piece of white paper does not fill that paper with the contract, or writing—the thing sealed! The merchant does not fill his store with goods by simply putting the sign over his door. To the man of common sense, it is time enough to hang out the sign after the goods are upon the shelves.

The catechism is senseless, or your creed and ritual are false, or words are not the signs of ideas.

But there is a doctrine, to my mind, still more awful, inculcated in the above language of the catechism; and that is, that baptism administered by mortal man is a seal of regeneration—of the new and everlasting covenant, or that it is a "*sealing ordinance.*" This matter of sealing, when it comes to a soul, is a fearful business. In holy Scripture, there are only two sealings mentioned—a sealing a member's title to the benefits of the new covenant, which is sealing him unto the day of redemption, and sealing unto eternal destruction.

Let us look into the nature of sealing. When the seal of State, or of an individual, is affixed to a document, that document must for ever remain in the letter and spirit in which it existed *when sealed.* To enter a new clause, or to change a line of an old one, would be *forgery.* To add a clause *below the seal,* would be of no force. To seal a piece of blank paper would be the sheerest folly. Now, will you contend that baptism is a sealing ordinance—a seal of the new and everlasting covenant, which God has intrusted in the hands of his ministers? Then, like the key power, whomsoever they seal on earth is so *sealed* for heaven, and whatsoever is unsealed has no part or title to the blessings of

the new covenant, here or hereafter. If baptism is such a seal, then the character—the moral relation of the subject (for this is the thing sealed)—must for ever remain as when the seal was applied. The document is for ever and *unalterably* finished. If the heart of the subject is right in the sight of God, it must remain for ever so—and if, even through the mistake of the agent, it is not right, then it is for ever *so sealed*. The inviolable seal of the Great King is affixed, and it must remain and the document go up to judgment.

Nothing can be introduced into the contract after the seal is placed upon it—to write it below the seal is of no binding force. If baptism is indeed a seal, then must the subject ever remain in the state his heart was in when it was applied to him, regenerate or unregenerate.

But baptism is not God's seal to the new covenant—not his seal at all. He never thus intrusted the souls of his creatures into the hands of men, however pious—for the most pious are FALLIBLE, and liable to err. The King intrusts his seal to no one.

"Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us is God, who hath also sealed us and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

"In whom after that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are *sealed unto the day of redemption.*"

I have not language in which to express my utter abhorrence to, and repudiation of, these popish doctrines of sacramental efficacy and ritual regeneration and salvation.

It is not part of Christianity—but Christianity inverted. The logical consequence of the above teaching is, that no unbaptized person, adult or infant, is regenerated, and of course

saved and this was the unanimous judgment of the ancient fathers who originated the dogma of baptismal regeneration, which was adopted by the Man of Sin, seeing as he did that he could by it inseparably connect the salvation of all men with the sacraments of his Church, and place them in the hands of his priests.

Mr. Wesley nowhere in his treatise intimates that an adult or infant can ordinarily be justified or saved, unless baptized. Read attentively his language:

"And the virtue of this free gift, the merits of Christ's life and death, are applied to us in baptism. 'He gave himself for the Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word;' (Eph. v. 25, 26;) viz., in baptism, the *ordinary instrument of our justification.* Agreeably to this, our Church prays in the baptismal office, that the person to be baptized may be 'washed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and, being delivered from God's wrath, receive remission of sins, and enjoy the everlasting benediction of his heavenly washing;' and declares in the rubric at the end of the office, 'It is certain, by God's word, that children *who are baptized*, dying before they commit actual sin, are saved.' And this is agreeable to the unanimous judgment of all the *ancient fathers.*"

The infant baptism of your ritual, therefore, nullifies and *stultifies* three articles of your Church.

"XII. Of the Church.—The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

Is your society—the Methodist Episcopal Church, if you please—a congregation of faithful men—of *believers?* for such is the definition of the phrase. Are there not more infants

and children within its pale than professed believers, taking no account of *seekers?*

But who will say that the sacrament of baptism is duly administered, when administered according to the teachings of your Discipline, explained by Mr. Wesley, and the standard works published by your Book Concern? And what intelligent Christian man will say, that the Supper is duly administered in your Church, when it is administered to *unregenerated* and *unbaptized seekers?*

I repeat what I have before said, that, according to the above article, your societies are not visible churches of Christ, and ought not to be so recognized. You may say that baptized infants and seekers are not *exactly* members of the Church, and are, therefore, not counted. "But all who are baptized are admitted into the Church—are baptized into the Church," says Mr. Wesley. "By baptism we are admitted into the Church, and consequently made members of Christ, its head." "For by one Spirit are we baptized into one body, (1 Cor. xii. 13,) viz., the Church."—*Doc. Tracts*, p. 248 All your standard writers admit, that they are actually members of the Christian Church. The great, and now the only argument left in your mouths proves this, *i. e.*, that infants were admitted into the Jewish Church by circumcision, and into the Christian, by baptism, which comes in its place.

Infant baptism stultifies this article also:—

"XVII. Of Baptism.—Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and a mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized, but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church."

Is baptism, when administered to an infant or non-believing child, "a *sign of profession?*" What profession does

an unconscious infant make—does an unregenerate child make? In what respect is it a mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized? Do you, indeed, believe the teachings of your ritual and Mr. Wesley's, that all infants are made Christians, or that an infant ever was made a Christian, by an infusion of grace in or by baptism? If you do, do you believe your own preaching, when you call upon them to repent and be regenerated, so soon as they are old enough to comprehend your language? Is baptism, when applied to infants, in very truth a sign of regeneration, or the "new birth?" If *you* do believe it, the world believes it a lying sign.

But, sir, your infant baptism subverts the vital doctrine of justification by faith alone, so justly set forth in your Articles, and so fully nullified by your ritual.

"IX. Of the Justification of Man.—We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."

This article clearly sets forth that we are justified *by faith* only. Now, that all who are truly regenerated are, at the same time, justified, you will admit; but all baptized infants are regenerated, according to your ritual and Mr. Wesley, therefore, all baptized infants are justified. Are they "justified" by *faith* only? They exercise no faith. They are justified by baptism—which is a work—as a means. Mr. Wesley says, "in baptism, the *ordinary instrument of our justification.*"

"The *ordinary* instrument!" Has God a common and an uncommon instrument of justification for those for whom the preaching or ordinances of the gospel is intended? Mr.

Wesley has nowhere explained the *extraordinary* instrument of justification.

I leave the reader to judge if even the baptism of adults, according to the teachings of the ritual and Mr. Wesley, does not also stultify the above Article IX.

To conclude this part of the subject: There are but two births—a natural birth and a spiritual birth. No man can be born naturally—of the flesh—but once, and no man can be born spiritually—of the Spirit—but once. The Scripture nowhere teaches that a man can be born of the Spirit, or regenerated, twice or thrice. I, therefore, am forced to the conclusion, that if the teachings of your Church, that all baptized infants are, indeed, regenerated, then they are *always* regenerated—always Christians. The grace of regeneration is a grace from which there is no falling. I am aware that you believe with Mr. Wesley, that "Herein, *i. e.*, in baptism, a principle of grace is infused, which will not be wholly taken away, unless we quench the Holy Spirit of God by long-continued wickedness." But then you must admit that no one who does fall from a state of regeneration can be regenerated the second time. Why, then, do you preach the possibility of repentance and regeneration to those children baptized in infancy?

You must either blot the ritual for infant baptism from your Discipline, and expurgate the writings of Mr. Wesley and your standard writers, as now published by your Book Concern, or teach and practise differently. There is no alternative left you.

My mind has been impressed with the amount of false teaching, the number of errors taught by you in the baptism of a solitary infant. Let us begin with the ritual.

1. The Methodist minister, in his instruction, is made to apply the language of the Saviour to Nicodemus, in John

iii. 3, to water baptism, and it manifestly has no such application.

2. That a man is regenerated and born anew of the water of baptism and the Holy Ghost.

3. He is made to add to the word of God, by saying "the Holy Ghost," when it reads in the original, of "wind, or spirit."

4. He teaches the people that it is their duty to call upon God, to grant to the child in his baptism that thing which by nature it cannot have, *i. e.*, regeneration, which is false.

5. That God would grant that the old Adam in the child may be so buried in the act, that the new man may rise up.

6. And that a *child*—an unconscious infant—is capable of receiving the fulness of grace.

7. And that, by its baptism, it can and is placed in the number of God's *elect* children. See first collect.

8. This language of Christ, "Suffer little children," &c., is applied to teach the duty of infant baptism, which is a gross misapplication of it.

9. In the instruction given to the ministers, viz., "He shall sprinkle or pour water upon it, or, if desired, immerse it in the water;" thus teaching that sprinkling or pouring water upon the subject is an act of baptism.

10. That sprinkling or pouring water upon, and immersing the subject in water, are one and the same baptism.

11. All who say "I baptize," and yet do not baptize, utter a falsehood. That Roman Catholic priest who sprinkled a baby with sand, and said, "*I baptize thee,*" and that one who merely said the words, "I baptize," &c. without any water, and without any sand, uttered falsehoods, no more real than the man who wets the face of a baby, and says "I baptize;" for neither is any baptism in any sense.

12. If he means that he sprinkles the infant in the name, *i e.*,

by the authority of the Father, he utters another untruth; for the Father has nowhere given him authority to perform such an act.

13. If he means the authority of the Son, this is also an untruth; for Christ gave no such command.

14. "Of the Holy Ghost"—and this is false; for the Spirit has nowhere intimated the authority for such a practice.

15. If the minister means, into the jurisdiction, or into a state of subordination to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he utters another untruth; for he baptizes the child into the jurisdiction of the bishop, and of the preacher, and of the presiding elder.

16. Suppose he attempts to explain the benefits resulting from baptism, and especially from infant baptism, and repeats the teachings of Mr. Wesley, as quoted in this letter. The first benefit we receive by baptism is the washing away the guilt of original sin, by the application of the merits of Christ's death. This is the 16th untruth.

17. Baptism is the ordinary instrument of our justification.

18. "That children who are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are saved." This, if language has any meaning, implies that children who are unbaptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are damned, which is falsehood No. 18.

19. By baptism, we enter into the new, the evangelical covenant which God makes with his spiritual seed.

20. That by baptism we are spiritually united to Christ.

21. "By baptism we, who were by nature the children of wrath, are made the children of God." This is a fearful untruth.

22. "By water, then, as a means—the water of baptism—we are regenerated or born again." This is as gross an untruth as Rome ever taught.

23. That baptism is called by the apostle "the washing of regeneration;" and this is utterly false; for the apostle does not allude to the rite of water baptism here, but to that washing to which the psalmist alludes—"Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin." "Create within me a clean heart." "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

24. That in baptism "a principle of grace is infused." This is monstrous.

25. "That in all ages the outward baptism is a means of the inward." This and the sentiment above is the doctrine of the great apostacy, *i. e.*, salvation by the sacraments—grace infused into the sacraments.

26. If infants are guilty of original sin [and they are], then they are the proper subjects of baptism; seeing in the ordinary way THEY CANNOT BE SAVED, *unless this be washed away by baptism!*

And thus, having plunged into the deepest quagmire of Rome, and in it laid the ground and reason of infant baptism, I leave it. Surely, what a mass of errors, and of the grossest kind and most pernicious character, and of the most popish cast, is taught in the baptism of an infant! Is it a matter of astonishment that Baptists oppose it so strenuously, and for twelve centuries have suffered—poured forth their blood like water, and given their bodies to the rack and the stake, rather than baptize their infants in the name of God, and that, too, when they could have saved their lives by consenting to the practice? Is it not more astonishing that every Baptist minister and member does not protest against the dogma with a thousand-fold more zeal and earnestness? Will they be considered faithful witnesses for Jesus while they allow such errors to be disseminated, with only a feeble and occasional rebuke?

LETTER XXXVII.

The action of baptism — The Discipline acknowledges immersion as a scriptural act of Baptism—It is so admitted in the older standard works published by the Methodist "Book Concern"—Mr. Wesley admits immersion to have been the primitive action in his Journal, in his Notes on N. T.—Adam Clark—Benson—And yet it is pronounced an unscriptural and indecent action in other works published by the Book Concern, and by the whole Methodist press in the South—Admissions of two Presbyterians, two Catholics, and two Episcopalians.

Dear Sir:—I wish briefly to call your attention to the contradictious teachings of your Church, touching the action of Christian baptism. I say the teachings of your Church; because it is responsible for all the works written by your preachers, and published by your "Book Concern." The Methodist press is solely and exclusively in the hands of the bishops and Conference. Every preacher is responsible to you for any obnoxious sentiment he may put forth in a book.—See Discipline.

Every preacher or minister is obnoxious to exclusion, if he inveighs against the doctrines or Discipline of your Church—if he impugns or denies what is there allowed and recognized as right. It must be granted that every sentiment uttered, and every position taken by an author in a book published

by your Book Concern, is endorsed by your committee on publications, and unless censured by the Conference, if continued to be published from year to year, is also approved and endorsed by the Church, which, we have seen, is composed of the bishops and travelling preachers.

Your Church admits immersion of a subject in water to be as scriptural an action as the sprinkling or pouring of water upon him.

Let the parents of every child to be baptized have the choice either of immersion, sprinkling or pouring. "He shall sprinkle or pour water upon it, or, if desired, immerse it in water."

1st prayer, "And didst safely lead the children of Israel, thy people, through the Red Sea, figuring thereby the holy baptism." Sprinkling or pouring could not then be that holy baptism.

"And by the baptism of thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ *in the* river of Jordan." And yet no one was ever buried with Christ in baptism, by sprinkling.

"Grant that the old Adam in this child may be so buried, that the new man may rise up in him." Here is an evident allusion to immersion, as there is in the catechism in defining the sacrament.

In answer to the question, "What is the outward visible sign or form in baptism?" we read "*Water*, wherein the person is baptized," &c. The Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, from which this ritual was borrowed and *amended*, still warrants no other baptism but immersion, except in case the child is too sickly to bear it, when it may be poured. In all cases, where the child is poured upon, it understands that the health of the child precludes immersion. He (the minister) shall *dip* it (the child) in the water discreetly, or pour water upon it. Again, "The minister may omit that

part of the above (alluding to the sign of the cross) which follows the *immersion*, or the pouring of water on the infant." In the "private baptism of infants," the direction is, "The minister shall *pour* water upon it." From what follows, viz., "If the child, which is after this sort baptized, do afterwards live," *we conclude that the direction about immersion is omitted on account of the state of the health of the child.*

Now what are the facts in the case? The *old English* Prayer-Book, in the time of Edward VI., acknowledges only one mode of baptism, viz., by immersion.

Mr. Wesley frankly declares, that immersion was the primitive action of baptism.

I refer first to his Journal of February 21, 1736: "Mary Welch, aged eleven, was baptized, according to *the custom* of the *first Church*, and the rule of the Church of England, *by immersion.*"

He refused to sprinkle a Mr. Packer's child, because it was not weakly. "I was asked to baptize a child of Mr. Packer's, second bailiff of Savannah; but Mrs. Packer told me, 'Neither Mr. Packer nor I will consent to its being dipped.' I answered, 'If you certify that your child is weak, it will suffice (the rubric says) to pour water upon it.' She replied, 'Nay; the child is not weak, but I am resolved it shall not be dipped.' This *argument* I could not confute; so I went home, and the child was baptized by another person." —*Journal*, May 5.

Mr. Wesley baptized adults by immersion. October 26, 1739, he says, "I baptized Mr. Wiggington *in the river*, by Baptist Mills, and went on my way rejoicing to French and Cay."

In his translation and notes of the New Testament, which he tells us in the preface was the last work of his life, in his comments on Rom. vi. 4: "'*Buried with him by baptism,*'

&c., alluding to the *ancient manner* of baptizing by immersion."

In his comments upon Col. ii. 12, he says, "The ancient manner of baptizing by immersion is as manifestly alluded to here, as the other manner of baptizing by sprinkling and pouring of water, in Heb. x. 22." Let it be noted that Wesley declares the apostle, in Romans and Colossians, manifestly alluded to the action of immersion in baptism. Then did Mr. Wesley understand him to say in these two passages, "Know ye not that so many of *us* [the apostles and the brethren at Rome] as have been immersed [Stuart] into Jesus Christ, have been immersed into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him by immersion into death." In Col. ii. 12, "Buried with him [Christ] in immersion," &c.

The apostles and the Christians at Rome and Colosse, together with Christ, were confessedly immersed, when they were baptized; and here we have undoubted scriptural authority of the most unquestionable character, that immersion was the only action for baptism, instituted by Christ, or known in the days of the apostles. He, then, who impugns this action impugns an institution of Christ; and he who scoffs at it as *indecent,* casts reproach upon Christ, the apostles, and the apostolic Christians. But Wesley is not alone in this admission. Adam Clark, whose Commentaries are published by the Book Concern, on Rom. vi. 4, says, "'We are buried,' &c. It is probable that the apostle here alludes to the mode of administering baptism by immersion [then, of course, that mode was practised in the apostles' time, and was the mode by which they, with Christ, were baptized], the whole body being put under the water, which seemed to say the man is drowned, as dead; and as he came up out of the water, he seemed to have a resurrection to life—the man

is risen again, he is alive; and he was, therefore, supposed to throw off his old Gentile state, as he threw off his clothes, and to assume a new character, as the baptized generally put on a new or fresh garment. I say it is *probable*, that the apostle alludes to this mode of immersion, but it is not absolutely certain that he did so, as some do imagine; for, in the next verse, our being incorporated into Christ by baptism, is also denoted by our being planted, or rather grafted, together in the likeness of his death; and Noah's ark, floating upon the water, and sprinkled by the rain from heaven, is a figure (1 Peter iii. 20, 21); but none of these gives us the same idea of the outward form as *burying*."

On Col. ii. 12, he says, "'Buried,' &c., alluding to the immersion practised in the case of adults, when the person appeared to be buried under the water, as Christ was buried in the heart of the earth; his rising again the third day, and their emerging from the water, was an emblem of the resurrection of the body, and then a total change of life."

We find no fault with Mr. Clark, nor do we praise him for these comments. He was *forced* to make them; the language of these scriptures will admit of no other possible consistent, honest interpretation. Mark well, Mr. Clark declares that adults, *i. e.*, all adults, of course, were immersed in the days of Paul. The Scriptures nowhere intimate that any but believing adults were baptized; and, therefore, we must conclude, until we are shown the passage, that none but adults were baptized; and, consequently, on Mr. Clark's hypothesis that all who were baptized in those days were immersed.

Benson's Commentaries are also published by the Book Concern. He says, "Rom. vi. 4, 'We are buried,' &c., alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion." Mr. Benson adds, "'By baptism into death, that is, to engage us to die unto sin, and to carry on the mortification and death of it

more and more." Then it is evident to my mind, that baptism was never designed for an unconscious infant, or an unregenerate person; for none but those who are dead to sin have a right to be buried, to declare the fact, and baptism engages none to die, except those who profess a death unto sin.

His comment on Col. ii. 12, is, "'Buried in baptism,' &c. The ancient manner of baptizing by immersion is as manifestly alluded to here, as the other manner of baptizing by sprinkling and pouring of water in Heb. x. 22."

How strikingly similar to Wesley's comment upon the same passage! That was a rare idea to drag in sprinkling and pouring by the hair of the head, because they were forced to confess without equivocation, that these passages manifestly alluded to immersion as the absolute baptism. The reader can easily satisfy himself that Heb. x. 22, has no possible allusion to Christian baptism, but simply to the ceremonial washings, which were immersions.—See Lev.

Mr. Burkett's Commentaries are also published by the Book Concern. He says, on Rom. vi. 4, "We are buried," &c.: "The apostle alludes, no doubt, to the ancient manner of baptizing persons in those hot countries, which was by immersion, or putting them under water for a time, and then raising them up again out of the water, which rite had also a mystical signification, representing the burial of our old man sin in us, and our resurrection to newness of life. The metaphors, burying and rising again, do imply and intimate this much: burial implies a continuing unto death; thus is mortification a continued act, a daily dying unto sin, and rising again supposes the person never more to be under the power of death."

This is very frank, we confess. These admissions settle the whole question of the action of baptism.

1. They teach us that Christ was *immersed;* and did he

not command his disciples to the end of the dispensation, to administer the rite by the same action he submitted to himself?

2. These passages decide that the apostle Paul, at least, was immersed.

3. They decide that all the Christians at Rome and Colosse, without exception, were immersed; for it says, so many of them as had been baptized were buried with Christ in baptism.

4. And they must decide the question in the mind of the impartial reader, that all the Christians baptized in the lifetime of the apostles were undoubtedly baptized as the apostles had been.

The point, then, is fairly settled. We have the highest authority in the Methodist Church admitting frankly, that immersion is scriptural baptism; that it was the action observed, in the case of adults, in the days of Christ and his apostles; and since they were all adults when they were baptized, that Christ and his apostles were immersed! I feel myself warranted to affirm, that Adam Clark admits that Christ and his apostles were immersed.

Now, sir, is it credible that from the presses of that very "Book Concern" books and tracts are poured forth in a ceaseless, unabating flood, denying the admission of these very men, giving the falsehood to Wesley himself, and teaching that the Methodist Discipline recognizes an unscriptural and indecent action for scriptural baptism? Call you not this inveighing against the Discipline and established doctrine of your Church? And yet you do not call these writers to account, but encourage them to preach and to write thus, by endorsing their books and publishing their sermons, and flooding the country with them. Where is your consistency? Where your authority? Where your sacred honor as men? Where your plighted vows as bishops?

Having given you the teachings of your Discipline, and of your oldest standard writers, I will submit a few specimens of the opposite teachings in works daily issued, side by side, and sent over the Union in the same boxes and packages with the above.

In Tract No. 99, p. 5: "'Except a man be born of *water* and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' (John iii. 5). Water here means the doctrines of the Gospel, or word of God, which is the instrumental cause of regeneration."

Will the reader refer to my last letter, and see how this palpably contradicts the express and universal teachings of the Discipline, that the water here is the literal water of baptism?

What have infants to do with baptism according to the Discipline, if the water here means the water of God? And yet the teachings of this tract are endorsed and sent out side by side with the Discipline!

"Thus, you see the Spirit, the water, and the blood agree in one fact—purification; ONE mode—SPRINKLING."—P. 8.

"Can they [the Baptists] remain insensible to our plea when we seriously inquire 'what right have they to adopt a mode which contradicts God's witnesses in earth, and excludes the pious from the Lord's table?' In looking at the testimony of the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, I could never imagine how they [the Baptists] first invented the idea of immersion."—P. 9.

I, too, might ask in reply, if I had designed any replication in this letter, what right has the Discipline, or the writer's Church, to endorse a mode as scriptural which "contradicts God's witnesses in earth?" As to when Baptists first invented the idea of immersion, perhaps Mr. Wesley, Lord King, Adam Clark, or Benson may have invented it for them,

and may be the inventor found it out in the Bible, where thousands of Methodists are finding it every year!

"We come to the conclusion of this matter: There is *one* Lord and *one* faith and *one* baptism, and the THREE that bear witness in earth agree on *one mode* of administration—*sprinkling*."—P. 11.

"We do not infer from what has been said, that those who practise immersion are unchristian people, because they submit to an *absurdity* instead of a *Christian ordinance*."—P. 11.

Is not this inveighing against the Discipline, and the doctrines of the Church, as taught by Wesley, Clark, and Benson? Does the Discipline teach an absurdity? and is this slander upon the Discipline and Wesley printed by the Book Concern, and sent out with the Discipline, and the writings of Clark and Wesley?

"We feel constrained to reprove some of our brethren who use the water of purification correctly themselves, yet seem to admit the *propriety* of *immersion*."—P. 11. Are not the brethren he reproves, Wesley, Clark, and Benson?

"It is plainly impossible that an ordinance of divine appointment can be administered correctly in two modes so wholly different. Instead of giving countenance to a mode of administration which differs so widely from the testimony of God's witnesses on earth, they ought to act the benevolent part of expounding the way of God more perfectly. (Acts xviii. 29.)"—P. 11. This is pure Baptist doctrine. According to this writer, and it is no less a name than "Rev. J. L. Wilson, Doctor of Methodist Divinity," there is, and can be, but one scriptural mode, and that is sprinkling. Pouring water upon the face, head, or the back side of the head, as well as immersion, is an "*absurdity*;" for it is plainly impossible that an ordinance of divine appointment can be administered correctly in two modes so wholly different as sprinkling

and pouring! What follows? All those Methodists—and there are thousands—who have been either poured upon or immersed, have not received a "Christian ordinance," but an absurdity, and are still unbaptized, the Discipline, and Wesley, and Benson, and Clark, to the contrary notwithstanding! And will Mr. Wilson, D.D., invite such unbaptized transgressors to his communion? I must dismiss this tract.

Tract 337, in commenting upon Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12: "It does not appear that the apostle designed *any* allusion to the *mode* of baptism. That he did, is by some advocates for immersion assumed without the least shadow of proof."–P.31.

This tract, duly endorsed, goes out with Wesley's Notes, and Clark's and Benson's Commentaries! How respectful to the scholarship and judgment of those men!

Tract. 180. In this it is asserted that immersion "is so revolting to our delicacy in *these times*, that we cannot but think immersion is an *innovation*." *O tempora! O mores!*

Tract No. 188: "The practice of immersion is indecent." And "we" can but think the indecency is in him who thinks thus. Again,

Immersion "makes those who are clean every whit appear more like objects of *grief*," &c. The idea of immersion is to me *exceedingly dreadful.*

Tract No. 153, by "Rev." Richard Watson. After attempting to show immersion without scriptural authority, he says, "Finally, it is, most of all, improbable that a religion like the Christian, so scrupulously delicate, should have enjoined the immersion of women by men, and in the presence of men."

"With all the arrangements of modern time, baptism by immersion is *not a decent* practice; there is not a female, perhaps, who submits to it, who has not a great previous struggle with her delicacy."

The tract of this most super-sensitive and hyper-delicate divine is closed and clenched by a foot-note by the editing committee of the Book Concern, who delicately pronounce immersion a sin.*

And this, too, is sent out with the Discipline, declaring that the Methodist Church encourages and gives licence to commit sin, and more, commands the preacher to be partaker of it whenever a person chooses to be immersed! and more, to commit this sin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and pronounce the "indecent," the "revolting," the sinful practice, both lawful and scriptural baptism!

And yet Dr. Thomas O. Summers, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, says, "Immersion is valid, *in spite* of the *plunging, and not in consequence of it.* It is a mangling of the Saviour's ordinance. We may, indeed, in *special cases*, and in *condescension to* WEAK *consciences,* administer the ordinance by plunging."—Pages 122, 123. Here it is evident that he would administer immersion, not that the Bible teaches it,

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* "Baptism, as an emblem, points out: 1. The washing away of the guilt and and pollution of sin. 2. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit In Scripture it is made an emblem of these two, and of these only. Some of the superstitions above alluded to sin therefore by *excess;* but immersion sins by *defect.* It retains the emblematical character of the rite as to the washing away of sin; but it *loses it entirely as to the gift of the Holy Ghost;* and, beyond the washing away of sin, is an emblem of nothing for which we have any scriptural authority to make it emblematical. Immersion, therefore, as distinct from every other mode of applying water to the body, means nothing. To say that it figures our spiritual death and resurrection, has, we have seen, no authority from the texts used to prove it; and to make a sudden pop under water to be emblematical of burial, is as far-fetched a conceit as any which adorns the Emblems of Quarles, without any portion of the ingenuity."

but because of *religious prejudices*, and in *condescension to weak consciences;* and yet do it in the name of the Trinity!

Dr. Lee, of the *Richmond Methodist Advocate*, openly avows immersion an indecent and disgustful performance, and he, I suppose, will administer it to weak consciences and to persons whose tastes and predilections are indelicate and disgraceful! It is a noticeable fact that the majority of the Conference editors in the South, as well as the authors and leading preachers, now advocate the views of Richard Watson.

Now, sir, do not understand me as complaining, but astonished. I read in the Holy Book that there shall come in the last days scoffers, and those by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of; but, sir, I am amazed that, in the face of your Book of Discipline, you will allow your preachers, your authors, and your editors to write and publish with impunity such sentiments, inveighing, as they so manifestly do, against it and your doctrines. I am astonished that you will, from year to year, issue from your Book Concern—the exponent of the doctrines and teachings of your Church—such contradictious publications, and endorse them by so doing as equally correct and scriptural! Surely public attention will ere long be awakened to the questionable morality of your proceedings. I am willing for you to eschew the practice of immersion; I am exceedingly anxious for you to do so, and have labored, and preached, and written, and I believe not wholly in vain, to force you to relinquish the practice. You have no right to it as a Church ordinance. You profane it. You mislead thousands of Christians, and entangle them in your societies by it. I entreat of you, have no more to do with it; it is an ordinance of the Church of God, and not of Mr. Wesley's, or any human organization. You have no more right to it than has an Odd Fellows' or Masonic Lodge, or a mere Bible or Tract Society. Pour-

ings and sprinklings, and seekership, and probation, and infant rites, and all such like traditions of men are the proper institutions for observance in your societies, which are themselves the institutions of men, and ruled exclusively by men.

The world expects that you will harmonize your publications, and then make your practice square with your teachings, if you demand its respect and confidence. And does it ask too much?

I cannot forbear closing this letter with quotations from the writings of two of the first scholars and historians in the Pedobaptist world, in order to sustain Wesley and Clark against the slanderous imputations cast upon them by circuit-riders of the present day.

Moses Stuart, late Professor of Theology at Andover, and a Presbyterian :—

"Βαπτω and βαπτίζω mean to dip, plunge, or immerge into any liquid. All lexicographers of any note are agreed in this."—P. 51, new edition.

"The word βαπτίζω means to overwhelm, literally and figuratively, in a variety of ways."

"The passages which refer to immersion are so numerous in the fathers that it would take a volume merely to recite them."

"But enough. 'It is,' says Augusti (Denker vii. p. 216), 'a thing made out,' viz., the ancient practice of immersion. So, indeed, *all the writers who have thoroughly investigated* this subject conclude. I know of no one usage of ancient times which seems to be more clearly and certainly made out. I cannot see how it is possible for any candid man who examines the subject to deny this."

"The mode of baptism by immersion, the Oriental Church [*i. e.*, Greek] has always continued to preserve, even down to the present time. The members of this Church are accustomed to call the members of the West-

ern Church [*i. e.*, Church of Rome] *sprinkled* Christians, by way of ridicule and contempt. They [the Greeks] maintain that *βαπτίζω* can mean nothing but immerge; and that *baptism by sprinkling* is as great a solecism as *immersion by aspersion*, and they claim to themselves the honor of having preserved the ancient sacred rite of the Church free from change and from corruption, which would destroy its significancy."

"F. Brenner, a Roman Catholic writer, has recently published a learned work which contains a copious history of usages in respect to the baptismal rite. He says,—

"'Thirteen hundred years was baptism generally and ordinarily performed by the immersion of a man under water; and only in extraordinary cases was sprinkling or affusion permitted. These *latter* methods of baptism were called in question, and *even prohibited*.'

"'In the work of John Floyer, on Cold Bathing, p. 50, it is mentioned, that the English Church practised *immersion* down to the beginning of the seventeenth century; when a change to the method of sprinkling gradually took place. As a confirmation of this, it may be mentioned that the first Liturgy, in 1547, enjoins a *trine immersion*, in case the child is not sickly.'

"We have collected facts enough to authorize us now to come to the following general conclusion respecting the practice of the Christian Church in general, with regard to the mode of baptism, viz., that from the earliest ages of which we have any account, subsequent to the apostolic age and downward for several centuries, the churches did generally practise baptism by immersion; perhaps *by immersion of the whole person;* and that the only exceptions to this mode which were usually allowed, were in cases of urgent *sickness* or other cases of immediate and imminent danger, where immersion could not be practised.

"It may also be mentioned here, that *aspersion* and *affusion*, which had in particular cases been now and then practised in primitive times, were *gradually* introduced. These became at length, as we shall see hereafter, quite common, and in the Western Church almost universal, some time before the Reformation.

"In what manner, then, did the churches of Christ from a very early period, to say the least, understand the word βαπτίζω in the New Testament? Plainly they construed it as meaning *immersion*. They sometimes even went so far as to forbid any other method of administering the ordinance, cases of necessity and mercy only excepted."

Dr. Parmley, of New York, writes to Prof. Anthon, of Columbia College, N. Y., that Dr. Spring, a Pedobaptist minister, declared to him that in the original, the word βαπτίζω had no definite or distinct meaning; that it means to immerse, sprinkle, pour, and a variety of other meanings.

Prof. Anthon replied:—

"There is no authority whatever for the singular remark made by the Rev. Dr. Spring, relative to the force of βαπτιζω. The primary meaning of the word is to dip, or immerse; and its secondary meanings, *if ever it had any*, all refer, in some way or other, to the same leading idea. Sprinkling, &c., are entirely out of the question."

This is the testimony of the first living scholar of England or America.

Dr. Wall, a learned Episcopalian, in his History of Infant Baptism: "And for sprinkling, properly so called, it seems it was at 1645 just then beginning and used by very few. It must have begun in the disorderly times after 1641, for Mr. Blake [who lived in England in 1644] had never used it, nor seen it used."

"So (parallel to the rest of their reformations) they reformed the font into a basin. This learned assembly could not remember that fonts to baptize in had been always used by the primitive Christians, long before the beginning of popery, and ever since churches were built; but that sprinkling for the common use of baptizing was really introduced (in France first, and then in the other popish countries) in times of popery; and that accordingly all those countries in which the usurped power of the Pope is, or has formerly been, owned, have left off dipping of children in the font; but that all other countries in the world (which had never regarded his authority) do still use it." Sprinkling is then manifestly one of the traditions of the Pope of Rome.

But Dr. Wall says, "Their [the apostolic and primitive churches'] general and ordinary way was to baptize by immersion, or dipping the person, whether it were an infant or grown man or woman, into the water. This is so plain and clear by an infinite number of passages, that, as one cannot but pity the weak endeavors of such Pedobaptists as would maintain the negative of it, so also we ought to disown and show a dislike of the profane scoffs which some people give to the English Antipedobaptists merely for their use of dipping. It is one thing to maintain that that circumstance is not absolutely necessary to the essence of baptism, and another, to go about to represent it as ridiculous and foolish, or as shameful and indecent; when it was in all probability the way by which our blessed Saviour, and for certain was the most usual and ordinary way by which the ancient Christians, did receive their baptism. I shall not stay to produce the particular proofs of this. Many of the quotations which I brought for other purposes, and shall bring, do evince it. It is a great want of prudence, as well

as of honesty, to refuse to grant to an adversary what is certainly true, and may be proved so. It creates a jealousy of all the rest that one says."—Vol. ii. p. 384.

I add to this the highest Roman Catholic authority in the world, that of Mons. Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, who was preceptor to one of the kings of France, and the frank concession to that authority by the learned Mons. de la Roque, pastor of a Reformed Church at Roan, in Normandy, who was engaged in controversy with Bishop Bossuet. BOSSUET says,—

"In fine, we read not in the Scripture that baptism was otherwise administered; and we are able to make it appear by the acts of councils, and by the ancient rituals, that for thirteen hundred years baptism was thus administered throughout the whole Church, as far as was possible.

"The very word used in the rituals to express the action of the godfathers and godmothers, saying, they *lift up* the child *from the baptismal font*, is sufficient to show that the child was plunged in it.

"Though these are incontestable truths, yet neither we nor those of the pretended reformed religion hearken to the Anabaptists, who hold mersion to be essential and indispensable; nor have either they or we feared to change this dipping (as I may say) of the whole body, into a bare aspersion or infusion on one part of it. No other reason of this alteration can be rendered, than that this dipping is not of the substance of baptism; and those of the pretended reformed religion agreeing with us in this, the first principle we have laid down is incontestable."

And in another place, "Jesus Christ (says he) has ordered to *dip*, as we have often observed. We have also taken notice, that he was baptized in this form, that his apostles practised it, and that it was continued in the Church down to the twelfth and thirteenth ages, and yet baptism given

only by infusion is admitted, without any difficulty, on the sole authority of the Church."

"Experience has shown that all the attempts of the reformed to confound the Anabaptists by the Scripture, have been weak; and therefore they are at last obliged to allege to them the practice of the Church. We see in their Discipline, at the end of the eleventh chapter, the form of receiving adult persons into their communion, where they make the proselyted Anabaptist acknowledge that the baptism of infants *is founded on Scripture, and on the perpetual practice of the Church.* When the pretended reformed believe they have the word of God very expressly on their side, they are not wont to build on the perpetual practice of the Church. But in this case, because the Scripture furnishes them with nothing by which they are able to stop the mouths of the Anabaptists, it was necessary to rely on somewhat else, and at the same time to confess that in these matters the perpetual practice of the Church is of inviolable authority."

What reply did the Reformed pastor make to this authority? Did he deny that Christ commanded his disciples to immerse, and not to sprinkle? Did he deny that it had been the practice for thirteen centuries? Did he deny that the Romish Church had upon her sole authority changed the action into sprinkling? No; he denies not one of the above statements, but frankly admits every one of them, and charges the Romish Church with having corrupted the ordinances by so doing. Hear him:

After having recited Mons. Bossuet's words, which prove immersion to have been the ancient and proper way of baptizing: "I add (says he) to these reasons of Mons. Bossuet, that baptism is an external mark that we are willing to die to sin and to the world, and to have part in the death and burial of Jesus Christ. St. Paul says, we are *buried*

with him by baptism, which shows that the believer was *plunged* in water, thereby to represent, as it were, a sort of death and burial. I further observe, that St. Paul calls it by a name which properly signifies a bath (or laver), (Tit. iii. 5,) when he says, *God has saved us by the laver of regeneration.*" He at length repeats what the bishop urges against the Protestants concerning the change of *dipping* into *sprinkling*, &c., in which they agree with those of the Romish Church, and then answers in the following terms: "I was willing (says he) to report this whole passage of Mons. Bossuet, to elucidate this matter to the Protestants, who scarce ever make any reflection on it. It is true, that the greatest part of them hitherto baptize only by *sprinkling*, but it is certainly an *abuse;* and this practice, which they have retained from the Romish Church, without a due examination of it, as well as many other things which they still retain, renders their baptism very defective. It corrupts both the institution and ancient usage of it, and the relation it ought to have to faith, repentance and regeneration. Monsieur Bossuet's remark, that *dipping* was in use for thirteen hundred years, deserves our serious consideration, and our acknowledgment thereupon, that we have not sufficiently examined all that we have retained from the Romish Church; that, seeing her most learned prelates now inform us that it was *she* that first abolished a usage authorized by so many strong reasons, and by so many ages, she has done very ill on this occasion, and that we are obliged to return to the ancient practice of the Church, and to the institution of Jesus Christ. I do not say that baptism by aspersion is null—that is not my opinion: but it must be confessed, if sprinkling destroys not the substance of baptism, yet it alters it, and in some sort corrupts it—'tis a defect which spoils its lawful form"—*Stennet's Answer to Russen*, p. 186.

LETTER XXXVIII.

The Methodists terms of communion—None so close, or so unscripturally close—They invert the ordinances and violate the divine order—The Discipline forbids Methodist preachers to invite members of other denominations—All who commune with Methodists must not only believe, but dress like them;—Close communion in marrying—In trading, in Sabbath-Schools, in Singing-Schools, and "Tune-Books"—Baptist communion not close—The testimony of Mr. Hibbard.

Dear Sir:—The preachers of no denomination are so clamorous upon the subject of communion as yours. Baptist "close communion"—Baptist illiberality and bigotry are the favorite themes of your ministers, upon all public and private occasions, when they think an impression can be made; and especially at their communion seasons, or after a revival of religious feeling in any town or community, they do not fail to extend a kind and urgent invitation to their "dear Baptist brethren whom they love so well," to come and sit down with them around the table of the Lord, &c. This, to the unreflecting, seems very liberal and Christian-like. But when their dear brethren refuse, they pour upon them a flood of abuse, for their selfishness, their unchristian feelings, their bigotry and narrow contractedness, and succeed in very many instances in effectually souring the minds of Christians and the world, and arousing feelings of contempt and even hatred against Baptists. Now, sir, I wish

to put a full stop to this wicked course of procedure on the part of your preachers, and this I shall succeed in effecting, provided I can influence either the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, or the ministers and members of Baptist churches, to discharge their duty.

I shall show, 1st, That those Methodist ministers who extend such general invitations to Baptists to commune with them, transgress the explicit law and rule laid down in the Discipline for the administration of the Lord's Supper. 2d, That they violate their own solemn pledges and oaths whenever they do so. 3d, That they fly directly in the face of the express command of their own bishop, whom they have sworn "reverently to obey," in all things. 4th, That Methodist communion is not only unscripturally close, but the most strict of any in professed Christendom. And 5th, and finally, will prove by Mr. Hibbard, that Methodists are guilty of an open violation of the commission and command of Christ in their observance of the Lord's Supper.

I. All those Methodist ministers who give general invitations to Baptists and others to commune with them, transgress the law of the Discipline, which they have sworn religiously to observe.

Read the law of Conference, in its statute-book, touching the Supper.

"SECTION II.—GENERAL DIRECTIONS.

"*Q.* Are there any directions to be given concerning the administration of the Lord's Supper?

"*A.* 1. Let those who have scruples concerning the receiving of it kneeling, be permitted to receive it either standing or sitting.

"2. Let *no person* who is *not a member of our* Church be admitted to the communion without *examination*, and some *token* given by an elder or deacon.

"3. No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our Church."*

For what is this examination, unless it be to shut out all those, whether Baptists or Presbyterians, who are guilty of any practice for which one of your own members would be excluded, as the third rule intimates?

The question then arises, for what practices would you exclude one of your own members?

1. *For refusing to attend the class-meetings.*

"*Q.* 3. What shall we do with those members of our Church who wilfully and repeatedly neglect to meet their class?

"*A.* 1. Let the elder, deacon, or one of the preachers, visit them, whenever it is practicable, and explain to them the consequence if they continue to neglect, namely, exclusion.

"2. If they do not amend, let him who has the charge of the circuit or station bring their case before the society, or a select number, before whom they shall have been cited to appear; and if they be found guilty of wilful neglect by a decision of a majority of the members before whom their case is brought, let them be laid aside, and let the preacher show that they are excluded for neglect of camp-meetings, and not for immoral conduct."

Now, suppose a member whom you have excluded for refusing to obey this human law, should join the Baptists or Presbyterians, and, hearing one of the liberal invitations of your preachers, should come forward, can he get a "token," if your ministers observe this law, as they have pledged themselves to do? Certainly not; all such Baptists or Presbyterians or Episcopalians are shut out.

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* Discipline, p. 155.

2. *For inveighing against either the doctrines or Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*

"If a member of our Church shall be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissensions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or Discipline, such person so offending shall be first reproved by the senior minister or preacher of his circuit, and if he persist in such pernicious practices, he shall be expelled from the Church.

Can Episcopalians, Presbyterians, or Baptists, then, get a token from an elder or deacon, if he keeps his solemn oath to observe the directions of the Discipline? Do not all Episcopalians regard and declare the Episcopacy of your Church, as a "sham Episcopacy," and your sect as a mischievous schism? Do not all Presbyterians hold, teach, preach, and declare, publicly and privately, that the government of Methodism is unscriptural, anti-republican, and in all its tendencies dangerous to the republicanism of this country, and equally to be feared with Romanism? Do they not also declare that your penance of Friday fasts, your class and band-meetings are popish, unscriptural and pernicious in their influence? Do they not openly pronounce your doctrinal views as Arminian, and therefore utterly subversive of the true grace of God and the plan of salvation by grace, and eminently dangerous to the souls of men? Do they not declare that your seekership and "probation," and your admitting confessedly unregenerate seekers to the communion, are also unscriptural and of evil tendency? Do they not everywhere "sow dissensions," by declaring that the Romish dogma of baptismal regeneration is openly taught in your office for baptism, and in the works of Mr. Wesley, which you still continue to issue with your endorsement from the Book Concern? And do not Baptists not only agree with all the above objections of Presbyterians, but

constantly and everywhere, at home and abroad, on the land, on the sea, from the pulpit and the press, upon the high-way and in the by-way, by the way-side and the fire-side, declare that by your form of government you dethrone Jesus Christ, reject his sole and supreme authority to rule in and over his churches,—that your bishops and preachers assume to themselves the impious prerogatives of antichrist, and assume the throne of Christ as kings in Zion? Do not Baptists assert that you have corrupted the membership of the churches of Christ (granting that your societies are churches of Christ) by the introduction of infants, of children, and of seekers; and that the main part and pillar of popery is the main part and pillar of Methodism—infant baptism? and, by word and deed, do not Baptists (as they should) refuse to accept your ordinances, your baptisms and ordinations, as scriptural or valid, and publicly refuse to recognize your societies as churches of Christ or branches of his Church? Now, these facts are well known to you, and to all your ministers who know any thing; and will they, in the face of these, and in the face of the inviolable directions of your Discipline, invite Presbyterians and Baptists to their table? Are we not guilty of inveighing against your doctrines and Discipline—of "sowing *dissensions*," *i. e.*, disaffection to your doctrines and practices, among your members? Are we not guilty of practices for which you would exclude a member of one of your societies? And could a soul of us all get a ticket to your table, if your law was executed?

You sometimes, for a show of liberality, invite our ministers and Presbyterian ministers, to preach with you—to hold union meetings with you; but can you invite them to eat with you, without an open violation of your solemn vows, before God and men, to your chief ministers? Let us suppose that our ministers are an exception to the above law—**are**

they not swept from the Methodist table by another? It must be granted, that, according to the spirit of the Discipline, the minister of no denomination should be invited, who is guilty of practices for which you would exclude a Methodist preacher. Very well; for what practices would you exclude the best of your own preachers? What says the book of Methodist laws?

"*Q.* 4. What shall be done with those ministers or preachers who hold and disseminate, publicly or privately, doctrines which are contrary to our articles of religion?

"*A.* Let the same process be observed as in case of gross immorality: but if the minister or preacher so offending do solemnly engage not to disseminate such erroneous doctrines in public or in private, he shall be borne with, till his case be laid before the next Annual Conference, which shall determine the matter."

Will not all Presbyterian and Baptist preachers glory to plead "guilty" upon this count? How then can one of them get a "ticket" to your table? Then you, too, are guilty of getting our ministers to preach for you, and yet refuse to let them eat with you!!

But who else cannot get "tickets" to your open communion table?

3. "*Those who wear high heads, enormous bonnets, or ruffles, or rings.*" [The law in 1856.

That I speak according to the law of Methodism, judge thou:

"Of Dress.

"*Q.* Should we insist on the rules concerning dress?

"*A.* By all means. This is no time to give encouragement to superfluity of apparel. Therefore receive none into the Church till they have left off superfluous ornaments. In order to this, 1. Let every one who has charge of a circuit

or station, read Mr. Wesley's Thoughts upon Dress, at least once a year, in every society. 2. In visiting the classes be very mild, but very strict. 3. Allow of no exempt case; better one suffer than many. 4. *Give no tickets to any that wear high heads, enormous bonnets, ruffles, or rings.*" [Changed.

There may be some Presbyterians, and Baptists, too, who are so exceedingly charitable as to have no particular principles in religious matters, and think and say that Methodist doctrines and practices are all right for Methodists, provided they are sincere in believing them; or, if they have principles, they are so generously consistent as to compromise them, and these characters might possibly pass the examination so far. But then, these very persons are apt to carry their heads rather high, as they generally think they are better, more catholic and liberal, than their brethren; and I have known some of them wear a ring on their little finger, and sometimes a ruffle in their shirt-bosom. But the ladies, we know, generally believe strongly in the latest fashion, just in proportion as they are indifferent to the principles and consistencies of religion. If it is the fashion to wear "enormous bonnets," they will wear such: or, if very little, and those worn more upon the neck and shoulders, they will wear such, and so wear them. If it is fashionable to wear many or few ruffles and flounces, they will dress accordingly; and as to "rings," they, of all Christians, are guilty of the greatest extravagance. Can these characters get a "ticket" if the elder or deacon conscientiously keep his pledge to observe the directions of the Discipline, and the commands of his chief ministers? By no means.

Is it urged that these directions concerning dress do not apply to the communion, but only to joining the society? I answer, if they debar from the Church, they also shut out from the Lord's table, according to the third rule above

quoted: "No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us who is guilty of *any practice for which we would exclude a member of our Church!*"

The members of the Methodist Church are to be excluded from the Supper if guilty of a violation of the law concerning dress, and consequently, the members of all other denominations. This is clear and unquestionable.

Elder S. Remington, who was for a long time a Methodist preacher, in his little work, "A Defence of Restricted Communion," has very kindly initiated us into all the minutiæ of this examination:

"On page 103 of their Book of Discipline, 1856, it is asked: 'Quest. Are there any directions to be given concerning the administration of the Lord's Supper?' In the second article of the answer, we have the following: 'No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us, who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our Church.'

"We will suppose a minister of another Church applies to an elder for admission to the Lord's Supper. The elder looks at him, and says, 'You are very plain in your dress, and as far as your appearance is concerned, I can admit you; but I must examine you as to your practice.' He then takes the Book of Discipline and reads chapter 4, section i., question 5, 'What shall be done with those ministers or preachers who hold and disseminate, publicly or privately, doctrines which are contrary to our articles of religion? Ans. Let the same process be observed as in case of gross immorality.' 'Now,' says the elder, 'I would inquire, are you with us in doctrine?' 'No, sir, I am not,' replies the applicant. 'I believe,' continues he, 'in the doctrine of personal and eternal predestination and foreordination, as set forth in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, pp. 15–19; and I accord

ingly preach it whenever I deem it proper so to do.' 'Then, says the elder, 'I cannot admit you to the table of the Lord, as you must perceive from the Discipline, which I have just read.' 'But then,' responds the applicant, 'that applies to *your* ministers, and not to us.' 'I admit that it does,' rejoins the elder; 'but think you that we ought to admit a person to the table who is guilty of what would exclude a minister from the Church? Besides, the Discipline says, in another place, "that no person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us, who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our Church."' 'May I not further inquire,' says the applicant, 'whether this last rule which you have quoted does not apply to members, and not to ministers?' 'I think not,' replies the elder; 'for we have another rule very similar to it which particularly applies to members. Page 140, chap. iv., sec. 3: "If any member of our Church shall be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissentions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or Discipline, such person so offending shall be first reproved by the senior minister or preacher of his circuit, and, if he persist in such pernicious practices, he shall be expelled from the Church." Now, if you will promise that you will not inveigh either against our doctrines or Discipline, I can admit you, otherwise, I cannot.' 'Why, I thought you were open communion; but I find I am mistaken,' replies the applicant. 'O yes,' says the elder, 'we are open communion. Our greatest objection to the Baptists is that they will hang on to close communion.' 'Well, upon my word,' says the applicant, 'all the difference I can perceive between you and the Baptists is, you profess *open* communion, and are in your Discipline *close* communion; while the Baptists make their practice agree with their profession. From what I can learn from you and your Discipline, I find

that the terms of communion with you are simply these—*we must believe, preach, and dress just like the Methodists.* If I mistake not, that is going a little ahead of the Baptists. For Baptists will allow their members and ministers to differ on some theological points, and yet not refuse to fellowship them at the Lord's table. Permit me, then, my dear friend, to suggest that, instead of crying out against the Baptists for their close communion, boasting at the same time of your open communion, you lay your hand upon your mouth until you alter your Discipline, striking out the restrictions which render your Church more restricted in her communion than even that Church which we Pedobaptists all agree to censure for its practical want of catholicity.'

"Finally, it can be shown from the Discipline of the Methodist E. Church, that it is as strictly close communion as any Baptist Church in the land. Chap. 4, section iii, question 1, it is asked, 'What shall we do with those members of our Church who wilfully and repeatedly neglect to meet their class? A. 1. Let the elder, deacon, or one of the preachers, visit them, whenever it is practicable, and explain to them the consequence if they continue to neglect, viz., exclusion. 2. If they do not amend, let him who has charge of the circuit or station bring their case before the society, or a select number, before whom they shall have been cited to appear; and if they be found guilty of wilful neglect by the decision of a majority of the members before whom their case is brought, let them be laid aside, and let the preacher show that they are excluded for neglect of camp-meetings, and not for immoral conduct.'

"From the above laws of the Methodist E. Church, we observe that *non-attendance upon class*, without any immorality, is sufficient to exclude a person from the Church. Now, suppose this excluded person who may be in every other sense

a worthy member, should join another evangelical Church—nothing against his moral character; no one doubts his piety; not even the Methodists doubt his sincerity—and that he is a man of genuine religion. All that can be said of him is, 'he will not attend class.' Well, now he comes back to the Church from which he has been excluded, and presents himself as a member of another Church, in good and regular standing, for admittance to the Lord's table. Says the elder, 'My friend, I cannot admit you.' 'Why not?' asks the brother; 'do you not believe that I am a Christian, and that I am bound with you, as such, to a better land? And do you not rejoice with me in the hope of sitting down together at the marriage-supper of the Lamb?' 'O yes, my brother,' responds the elder; 'I must inquire (perhaps I am a little too fast)—are you truly sorry that you did not comply with the rules of the Church and attend class?' 'I am not sorry, my brother,' he responds, 'for I did not then, neither do I now, believe in class-meetings.' 'Well, then, I must read you the law,' replies the elder. 'Page 96, section iv., article 5: "After such forms of trial and expulsion, such person shall have no privilege of society or of sacraments in our Church without contrition, confession, and proper trial." Now, if you are not penitent, as I perceive you are not, you see that you cannot be admitted to the Lord's table with us.' He answers, 'I have only to say, my dear brother, as I have not violated any of the laws of Jesus Christ, I did not know but you might deem it proper to allow me to sit down occasionally with my old brethren at the Lord's table. 'It is true,' replies the elder, 'I do not charge you with any direct violation of the laws of Christ, but you have broken or refused to yield obedience to the laws of our Church, and that is sufficient to shut you away from the table.' 'Why, elder, the Baptist would not do that thing. They shut the

door, they say, because we will not obey Christ. And there seems to be some good reason in that; but you admit that I am not excluded for disobedience to Christ, but to your Church. Has your Church a power to make laws, and bind them upon its members, that Christ never made, and then for non-obedience to exclude a genuine Christian, and treat him as a heathen and a publican? If so, I regret not that I am out of the pale of her communion.'

"In conclusion, let us inquire whether, by fair inference, this rule appertaining to *class-meetings*, which would exclude all the members of the Methodist E. Church who wilfully refuse to attend them, and cut off all such from the Lord's table in that Church, would not also preclude members of other churches, who do not attend class-meetings, from communing with the Methodists? I think it would. We have seen already that those excluded for the neglect of this duty are cut off from that privilege, though they may be genuine Christians, and in good standing in other churches. And the rule which says, 'No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us, who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our Church,' would shut out from communion among the Methodists all members of other churches who do not practise attending class-meetings. Now, I would ask what are the facts in this case? In the first place, class-meetings are a peculiarity of Methodism. There may be a few churches that have them to some limited extent; but the great mass of the evangelical churches neither have them nor practise attending them. Their 'practice' essentially varies from that of the Methodist E. Church, and is such as would exclude them from the Methodist E. Church if they belonged to it. Can the Methodists, then, admit them to the Lord's Supper? Their *rule* says, that they shall not be admitted. If they do admit them,

they break their own rules; and this they ought not to do, for every travelling preacher is required to pledge himself 'not to mend their rules, but to keep them; not for wrath but conscience' sake.' See p. 76, art. 10."

II. I maintain that the rules, and regulations, and directions of the Discipline are all operative, and are enjoined to be observed in every point, great and small. The Conference every four years revises the Discipline, and all that remains is binding, and the preachers solemnly bind themselves, by their solemn pledges and oaths, to keep them; and therefore if he gives an "open communion" invitation, he violates his obligations. Look at his pledges!

1. As a probationer seeking for admission as a member, he is put upon trial for six months, to see if he will observe and keep the rules. See "General Rules."

2. When he is formally received into the Church, he is required to "give satisfactory assurances" of his "willingness to *observe and keep the rules of the Church.*" See Ch. 3, sec. 1: "*And shall, on examination by the minister in charge, before the Church, give satisfactory assurances both of the correctness of their faith, and their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church.*"

The following are *a few* of the rules especially and sacredly enjoined upon all preachers:

"Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath but conscience' sake.

"Observe! it is not your business only to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many as you can; to bring as many sinners as you can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember!—a Methodist preacher is to mind every point

great and small, in the Methodist Discipline! Therefore you will need to exercise all the sense and grace you have.

"Act in all things not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such, it is your duty to employ your time in the manner in which we direct: in preaching, and visiting from house to house; in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labor with us in the Lord's vineyard, it is needful you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for His glory."

When examined to be received as a travelling preacher into full connection, he is asked the following questions (see Dis., Part I., sec. viii.):

"After solemn fasting and prayer, every person proposed shall then be asked, before the Conference, the following questions (with any others which may be thought necessary), namely: Have you faith in Christ? Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life? Are you groaning after it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and his work? Do you know the rules of society?—of the bands? Do you keep them? Do you constantly attend the sacrament? Have you read the form of Discipline? Are you willing to conform to it? Have you considered the rules of a preacher (see § 9), especially the first, tenth, and twelfth? Will you keep them for conscience' sake? Are you in debt?

"Then if he give us satisfaction, after he has been employed two successive years in the regular itinerant work on circuits or in stations, which is to commence from his being received on trial at the Annual Conference, and being approved by the Annual Conference and examined by the President of the Conference, he may be received into full connection."

Among the other duties commanded him, as a preacher in charge, are these: [Altered since 1856.]

"As Methodists: Do you never miss your class or band?

"As preachers: Have you thoroughly considered your duty? And do you make a conscience of executing every part of it? Do you meet every society? Also, the leaders and bands?

"To see that every band-leader have the rules of the bands.

"To enforce vigorously, but calmly, *all the rules of the society.*

"To receive, try, and expel members, according to the form of Discipline.

"To read the rules of the society, with the aid of the other preachers, once a year in every congregation, and once a quarter in every society."

When he is ordained as a "deacon," he is required to take a solemn pledge to obey his chief ministers, who impose these duties upon him, and to follow their godly admonitions.

"*The bishop.* Will you reverently obey them to whom the charge and government over you is committed, following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions?

"*Ans.* I will endeavor so to do, the Lord being my helper."

When he has proved himself faithful for four years, he is entitled to the degree of "elder," when he takes the following pledge, or rather oath, since it is promised in the name of God:

The bishop prefaces it thus, "And now that this present congregation of Christ, here assembled, may also understand your minds and wills in these things, and that this your promise may the more move you to do your duties, ye shall

answer plainly to these things which we, in the name of God and his Church, shall demand of you touching the same.

"*The bishop.* Will you reverently obey your chief ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions, submitting yourselves to their godly judgments?

"*Ans.* I will so do, the Lord being my helper."

In view of all these facts, am I not justified in saying that Methodist preachers are solemnly bound to observe every advice, every rule, every direction, and every point, great and small, within the lids of the Discipline? And that he violates the rules of his Discipline, and his solemn oaths at the same time, when he invites Baptists and Presbyterians to the Methodist table?

III. But they also flagrantly transgress the express command, decision, and godly judgments of their bishops.

Upon the construction and application of the rules for observing the Lord's Supper, Bishops Coke and Asbury, in their notes on the Discipline, say, "We must also observe that our elders *should be very cautious* how they admit to communion persons who are *not* in our society."—*Hist. Dis.*, p. 323.

Bishop Hedding, in his sermon upon the administration of the Discipline, which is now published by the "Book Concern"—and therefore his directions are *operative*—says, "Is it proper for a preacher to give out a general invitation in the congregation to members in *good standing in other churches, to come to the Lord's Supper?* No; for the most unworthy persons are apt to think themselves in good standing. And sometimes persons who are not members of any Church will take the liberty from such an invitation to come. And, again, there are some communities called churches

which, from heretical doctrines, have no claims to the privileges of Christians, and ought not to be admitted to the communion of any Christian people.

"The rule in that case is as follows, and *ought to be strictly adhered to:* Let no person, who is not a member of our Church, be admitted to the communion without examination, and some token given by an elder or deacon," &c.—See *Hedding*, pp. 72, 73.

Do not your preachers fly in the face of the Episcopal authority, when, in order to sour the minds and inflame the prejudices of the people, they give general invitations to all professed Christians, to come. "Come all who love God. We are not 'close communionists;' it is the Lord's table; come all the Lord's people. We have no authority to forbid you to come and eat at his table; and we are not wicked enough to commit such a sin, nor such Pharisees as are some, to say, 'Stand back, we are holier than you.'" In what light shall we hold such a minister? Is he a conscientious—an honest man?

IV. I know of no denomination so rigidly close, so illiberally and unscripturally strict in their communion as are the Methodists, judging from their laws and regulations.

1. They make the way a person carries his head a test of communion; and the Scriptures say nothing of this. [Altered.]

2. The shape of the bonnet worn; and the Scriptures say nothing of this.

3. The wearing of a "ruffle;" and why not include plaits, and hems, and flounces, and bows, and ribbons? and the Scriptures say nothing of these as a test to the Supper.

4. The wearing of a "ring;" and why not include breast-pins, sleeve-buttons, lockets, and watch-keys, chains, and seals?

5. They are close communion in their class-meetings. Here is the law: [Altered since 1856.]

"*Q.* How often shall we permit serious persons, who are not of our Church, to meet in class?

"*A.* At every other meeting of the class in every place let no stranger be admitted. At other times they may; but the same person not above twice or thrice."

6. Close communion, even in their love-feasts, for this is the law:

"*Q.* How often shall we permit strangers to be present at our love-feasts?

"*A.* Let them be admitted with the utmost caution; and the same persons on no account above twice or thrice, unless he become a member."

7. In their band-meetings; for to these there is positively no admittance to any but the household of faith.

8. In singing-schools. Read the law: "Let it be recommended to our people not to attend the singing-schools which are not under our direction.

9. In the very tune-books to be used; for here is the Episcopal authority—"Recommend our tune-book!"

10. Close communion in trading, in employing workmen, or lawyers, or doctors; and in political and civil elections. Methodists must employ Methodist workmen, in preference to Baptists, Presbyterians, or men of the world; trade with Methodist merchants in preference to all others; take the pills of Methodist physicians, and cast their votes for the Methodist candidate for all civil offices, in preference to all others! Here is the law, which the preachers are bound to see that their members observe, on pain of exclusion; here is the law that is a disgrace to the name of religion:

"It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

"By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be.

"Employing them preferably to others;

"Buying one of another;

"Helping each other in business;

"And so much the more because the world will love its own, and them *only*."

This is commercial and political communion. It is in the power of the bishops and preachers of the Methodist Church to say which of two candidates shall be elected as a representative, or senator, or judge, or governor, or president of the United States. They can cast the entire vote of Methodists upon any one man!

11. Close communion in matrimony.

Here is the authority, far above the law or the prophets with mere Methodists:

"We do not prohibit our people from marrying persons who are not of our Church, provided such persons have the *form*, and are *seeking* the *power*, of godliness; but we *are determined to discourage* their marrying *persons who do not come up to this description*."—*Discipline*. Page 122.

I am thoroughly convinced, from many years' observation, that thousands of young persons are annually gathered into Methodist societies to facilitate their matrimonial alliances. A young man, the son of a Baptist—moral, but a non-professor, "falls in love" with the beautiful daughter of a rigid Methodist. The young people are mutually pleased with each other, and engage themselves. The affair is known to the old folks, and the young gentleman soon learns through the daughter that "pa is not very favorable to the union—because—he has no objection to you personally—but he thinks it highly improper for a Christian to marry a sinner; in fact, to tell you the truth, Charles, pa is determined that his children shall not marry out of the Church, and the preacher is opposed to it; he professes to think a great deal

of me, and he says if I marry you—you will take me off to the Baptist Church. It's all foolishness in them, but I tell you how you can remove all their objections,—just join our Church as a seeker,—there is no harm in that you know—you need not profess until you get ready, —just let the preacher have your name, and the old folks, and the preacher, too, and aunt Deborah, and Eunice, and uncle John, our class-leader, who now oppose us, will all be so delighted—and we can get married next week, if you wish."

Now, who that understands the springs of action does not know that Charles' objections will be weak in proportion to his love for Mary, and of what avail will be the contrary advice of his parents—who see the wires that are being ingeniously fastened around their child—but to drive him all the sooner into the trap? So certainly as his parents raise their objections—though upon the sole ground that it is wrong—impious for a sinner and an impenitent sinner to join the Church, and more heinous from such motives—Charles will become a bitter Methodist, and a blind, prejudiced advocate of all the doctrines and usages of Methodism, and ten to one live and die in the society, a poor, unregenerate "seeker," as tens of thousands have done before him.

This matrimonial communion is a most ingenious net in which to take the young. It is purely of popish origin, and admirably adapted as a part of the machinery of priestcraft and sacerdotal strategy.

12. *Methodists are close communion in their Sabbath-schools.*

"*Q.* What shall we do for the rising generation?

"*A.* 1. Let Sunday-schools be formed in all our congregations where ten children can be collected for that purpose. And it shall be the special duty of preachers having charge of circuits and stations, with the aid of the other preachers,

to see that this be done; to engage the coöperation of as many of our members as they can; to visit the schools as often as practicable; to preach on the subject of Sunday-schools and religious instruction in each congregation at least once in six months; to lay before the Quarterly Conference at each quarterly meeting, to be entered on its journal, a written statement of the number and state of the Sunday-schools within their respective circuits and stations, and to make a report of the same to their several Annual Conferences."

"3. Let our catechisms be used as extensively as possible, both in our Sunday-schools and families; and let the preachers faithfully enforce upon parents and Sunday-school teachers the great importance of instructing children in *the doctrines and duties of our holy religion.* Let the preachers also publicly catechize the children in the Sunday-school, and at special meetings appointed for that purpose. It shall also be the duty of each preacher, in connection with reporting the Sabbath-school statistics at each Quarterly Conference, to state to what extent he has publicly or privately catechized the children of his charge."

I notice this feature, not because I see any thing in it that is inconsistent with Methodism, or, did I believe in the doctrines of the society, that I would not heartily approve, but because I would convince my own brethren, and all others who cannot endorse the doctrines of Methodism, that Methodist Sabbath-schools are very improper nurseries for the instruction of their children.

Methodist Sunday-schools are under the supervision of the Quarterly Conference, and are all auxiliary to the Methodist "Sunday-School Union," which is not "The American Sunday School Union."

They are under the especial care and oversight of the preachers.

The main object of their schools is to teach the Sabbath-school children, not Jesus, but Methodism—to instil the doctrines and usages of the Methodist E. Church into their young minds, and thus to bias them—prejudice them in favor of the Methodist E. Church. Mark the rule. "*Our catechisms*" must be used, and the great importance of instructing children in *the doctrines* and *duties* of "OUR holy *religion.*" (Bear these two words in mind, as I shall shortly explain them by the catechism.) To be certain that the children are so instructed, the preacher must "catechize in the Sunday-schools, and even have special meetings appointed for that purpose." There is no doubt but that it is most faithfully done.

Lest my language may appear severe and unwarranted, I will introduce the following letter, addressed to the *Tennessee Baptist*, by the pastor of the Baptist Church, Shelbyville, Tenn. It appears that Bishop Capers fully explained to him why Methodists attach so much importance to *their* Sunday-schools, and so little to those under the direction of other denominations, and why they are so opposed to Union Sabbath-schools.

"BROTHER GRAVES:—Though I have, perhaps, been sufficiently zealous in defence of Baptist principles and practices, and have been forward, on all suitable occasions, to expose what I conceived to be the errors of others, I have always been ready to extend the hand of recognition and love to all who acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ, and to walk with them as far as we were agreed. I can believe Pedobaptists to be in error, and at the same time acknowledge them to be Christians, and as such, participate with them in many acts of Christian worship, and plans for the promotion of the cause of religion and the good of society, without compromising any principle of truth or article of faith, or practice

as a Baptist. This, I believe, is according to the prevailing opinions of our brethren everywhere.

"It has been conducive to the good of society in a great many instances, for Baptists and Pedobaptists to unite in neighborhoods and small villages, where more than one school could not be carried on, in sustaining Sabbath-schools. On this subject, however, Methodists have made themselves exclusive, and pursue a practice so sectarian that Baptists, at least, ought neither to unite with them in a school, or send their children to school under their control. It is their settled policy to make the Sabbath-school a nursery of Methodism, in which, from their infancy, all the doctrines of the 'Discipline' are taught as Scripture truths.

"I happened to be present during the sitting of the Tennessee Conference, two years ago, in Shelbyville, when the presiding bishop (Capers, I believe) delivered the following sentiments, which I noted down at the time. He remarked that Methodist preachers were deficient in their reports of Sabbath-schools—that many reported *Union schools* on their circuits over which Methodists did not have exclusive control—that he was opposed to these Union schools; he wanted 'Methodist schools, where Methodist children could be taught Methodist doctrines.' This came from the venerable bishop, in the form of an address to the ministers over whom he was an overseer, and was regarded by me as instructions for their future guidance. Here, then, was an avowal of the intention of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, to make their Sabbath-schools decidedly sectarian.

"In consummating their design, that denomination introduces into their schools sectarian books and tracts, and recently have commenced the publication of the *Sabbath-School Visitor*, which is introduced into all their schools, abounding with essays and *pictures* teaching infant baptism

and church membership, sprinkling, pouring, "falling from grace," salvation by half work and half grace, together with all the lax religious principles of Methodism. If Presbyterians and others are disposed to allow their children's minds to be poisoned with Methodism, I have nothing to say on the subject; but for the sake of the truth and the best interests of the souls of their children, I would warn all Baptists to be divorced from all Methodist Sabbath-schools.

"M. H."

I therefore call the attention, not only of all Baptists, but of all parents, to the Methodist catechism, that they may see what "doctrines" and "duties" on "religion" are impressed upon and ingrained into their children's minds in Methodist Sunday-schools.

I have just procured from the "Book Concern," the catechism the Discipline enjoins to be used, and give you the following specimens of the doctrines and "duties" taught:

"*Q.* What offices do we recognize in the Christian ministry?

"*A.* Those of deacons, elders, and bishops

"*Q.* What is the duty of a deacon?

"*A.* To read and expound the word of God, to instruct the young, and to assist the elder in his work.

"*Q.* What is the duty of an elder?

"*A.* To preach the gospel, to administer the sacraments, and to exercise discipline in the Church.

"*Q.* What is the duty of a bishop?

"*A.* To oversee the spiritual and temporal interests of the Church, to preach the gospel, to ordain other ministers, and to direct their labors.

"*Q.* What distinguishing doctrines were preached by the Wesleys?

"*A.* The guilt and total depravity of man, a present salva

tion by faith in Christ alone, and the direct witness of the Holy Spirit.

"*Q.* What was the result of such preaching?

"*A.* A great and glorious revival of religion, the subjects of which were generally called Methodists.

"*Q.* Has this revival ceased?

"*A.* No; its effects and benefits have come down to us, and thus the term Methodist has been perpetuated and made common.

"*Q.* Why is our Church also called Episcopal?

"*A.* On account of its form of government, it being under the superintendence of bishops.

"*Q.* What are some of the characteristics of the Methodist Episcopal Church?

"*A.* Its evangelical doctrines, its itinerant ministry, and its peculiar means of grace, namely, love-feasts and class-meetings.

"*Q.* What is meant by the itinerancy?

"*A.* A system of ministerial labor by which, annually, every itinerant minister is designated to labor in some proper field, and every field, as far as possible, furnished with a minister.

"*Q.* Do ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church enjoy as high and as complete spiritual immunities and advantages as any other Church, or branch of the Church of Christ?

"*A.* They undoubtedly do.

"*Q.* What is the water used in baptism designed to represent?

"*A.* The blood of Christ, by which he washes us from our sins.—Rev. i. 5; Heb. xii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 2.

"*Q.* Is any particular mode of administering water in baptism enjoined in Scripture?

"*A.* There is not; hence it is neither wise nor scriptural to insist upon any mode as essential to valid baptism. [!!]

"*Q.* What mode of baptism does our Church most commonly practise?

"*A.* Sprinkling, as that for which we have the greatest number of Scripture examples and analogies.

"*Q.* What obligations were laid upon you in Christian baptism?

"*A.* My baptism obliges me to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomp and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; also to believe the whole faith of the gospel, and to keep God's holy will and commandments, walking in the same all the days of my life.

"*Q.* Is it right to lay such obligations upon young children?

"*A.* It is; for several reasons.

"1. Because God himself makes these requirements of all his creatures.

"2. Because they are under a natural and eternal obligation to love and serve God, independent of this covenant.

"3. Because they are bound for their own good, and agreeably to the practice of mankind in other things.

"*Q.* Ought not children to be carefully instructed in the nature and obligations of the baptismal covenant?

"*A.* They ought; and as soon as they are capable, they ought to assume its pledges as their own.

"*Q.* Will Christian baptism of itself save our souls?

"*A.* It will not; unless we indeed become new creatures in Christ, and are created in him unto good works, we shall forfeit the benefits secured to us by baptism.—2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. ii. 10.

"*Q.* Have we reason, then, to be grateful for this rite and ordinance of our holy religion?

"*A.* We should indeed be grateful for it as a divinely-appointed means of enabling us to work out our salvation, and to lay hold on eternal life."

My limits compel me to stop here, and I submit these quotations without comment, save this—let those parents who do not wish their children taught *these* "doctrines and duties" keep them from Methodist Sunday-schools.

In conclusion, let me ask, in all earnestness, why will Methodist preachers continue to give general invitations to all professed Christians, and sinners too, and especially urge Baptists to come to their tables, and when they respectfully decline charge them with an unchristian spirit, and bigotry; and when Baptists do not invite them abuse them for uncharitableness and want of liberality? Methodist ministers have their rules and directions, as we have seen, and they are bound to their strict observance by all the sanctities of oaths and promises; and why do they not keep them touching the administration of the Supper, as they are known to do in other matters?

Do they not invite Baptists to their table with the intent to insult us, to outrage our feelings, and to prejudice our views and practice in the eyes of the world? For me to ask and urge a man or woman to do that—to participate in some act which I well knew his or her principles of honor or virtue would not allow, and which I well knew that man or woman considered criminal, would I not be offering a gross insult to that person? And suppose I had been repelled and rebuked again and again, in what light must my third and fifth and twentieth invitation be regarded!! Do not Methodist preachers know full well that Baptists can no more go to their tables, or commune with them without a surrender of all their principles and a violation of the word of God, than Methodist preachers can invite us

to their tables without a violation of the word of their ministers that they have pledged themselves reverently to obey! But do Baptists act inconsistently with their own principles? It is not alleged. Is it not well known to all intelligent Methodists, that the charge of *close communion* is no more applicable to Baptists than to themselves? It is well known, and it is frankly admitted by them—and admitted and asserted, too, in a work now before me, published by the "Methodist Book Concern," and therefore the admission is endorsed by the Methodist Church. I submit a lengthy extract, for an impartial examination.

The work is by the "Rev. F. G. Hibbard," who, as a scholar and writer, has no superior in the Methodist E. Church. He says,—

"The bearing which the *mode* of baptism is alleged to have on the *validity* of the ordinance; and the connection which it bears to the lawful approach to the Lord's table, and to the rights and immunities of church fellowship; these invest it with a character of paramount importance. The question no longer respects merely a ceremony of religion, but has assumed the bold and alarming aspect of CHURCH OR NO CHURCH! Every ordinance, every institution, every rite and privilege of visible Christianity, is drawn along and merged into the bosom of this doubtful controversy. Within its ample folds are embraced the question of true Protestantism and pure Christianity; while its capacious vortex has set in motion the very pillars of the visible Church, threatening to whelm it in its troubled waters. The issues of this controversy are to decide whether the Pedobaptist churches are the true churches of Christ; whether their ministers hold their commission to administer the ordinances by a lawful tenure; whether their members have any right to approach to the table of the Lord, and whether the privi-

leges of the Church may be conceded to them without desecration. Verily, the question of the mode of baptism is a far-reaching subject. Without controversy it is a grave theme.

"Before entering upon the argument before us, it is but just to remark that in one principle the Baptist and Pedobaptist churches agree. They both agree in rejecting from communion at the table of the Lord, and in denying the rights of Church fellowship to, all who have not been baptized. Valid baptism they consider as essential to constitute visible Church membership. This also we hold. The only question, then, that here divides us, is, 'What is essential to valid baptism?' The Baptists, in passing the sweeping sentence of disfranchisement upon all other Christian churches, have only acted upon a principle held in common with all other Christian churches, viz., that baptism is essential to Church membership. They have denied our baptism, and as unbaptized persons we have been excluded from their table. That they err greatly in their views of Christian baptism, we, of course, believe. But, according to their views of baptism, they certainly are consistent in restricting thus their communion. We would not be understood as passing a judgment of approval upon their course; but we say, their views of baptism force them upon the ground of strict communion, and herein they act upon the same principles as other churches, *i. e.*, they admit only those whom they deem baptized persons to the communion table. Of course, they must be their own judges as to what baptism is. It is evident that, according to our views of baptism, we can admit them to our communion; but with their views of baptism, it is equally evident, they can never reciprocate the courtesy. And the charge of *close communion* is no more applicable to the Baptists than to us, inasmuch as the question of Church

fellowship with them is determined by as liberal principles as it is with any other Protestant churches, so far, I mean, as the present subject is concerned; *i. e.*, it is determined by valid baptism.

"Now, this being the case, does it not become a measure of responsible moment to decide upon the question of the mode of baptism? Indeed, so awful are the aspects of this subject, that thousands have feared to assume a decided position in reference to it. They have held to exclusive immersion, and at the same time have held to catholic communion, or communion with persons who have not been immersed—an anomaly and absurdity that presents a singular contrast to the characteristic symmetry of Christian theology."*

I also submit the declaration of Dr. Griffin, the highest authority in the Presbyterian Church.

"I have always considered baptism by immersion as valid; and were I imperiously called upon by the conscience of an applicant, and could do it without offence to others, I should have no hesitation in administering the ordinance in this form. In short, I regard your churches as churches of Christ. The question is, Is it reasonable in them so to regard us?

"The separating point is not about the subject of baptism, but *merely the mode.* If we could be considered as fairly baptized, our Baptist brethren certainly would not exclude us merely because we apply the seal to infants.* Many greater mistakes (allowing this to be one) are made by those whom we do not exclude from our communion.

"I agree with the advocates for close communion in two points: (1.) that baptism is the initiating ordinance which introduces us into the visible Church; of course, where there is no baptism there are no visible churches: (2.) that we ought not to commune with those who are not baptized, and, of course, are not Church members, even if we regard them as Christians. Should a pious Quaker so far depart from his principles as to wish to commune with me at the Lord's table, while yet he refused to be baptized, I could not receive him; because there is such a relationship established between the two ordinances that I have no right to separate them; in other words, I have no right to send the sacred elements out of the Church.

The only question then is, whether those associations of evangelical Christians that call themselves churches, and that practise sprinkling, are real churches of Christ; in other words, whether baptism by sprinkling is valid baptism."

"If nothing but immersion is baptism, there is no visible Church except among the Baptists."

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* Most certainly we would, for Pedobaptist Societies must adopt the primitive form of Church government, before they can be recognized by Baptists as Christian Churches.

LETTER XXXIX.

THE "CALVINISM" OF THE CREED AND THE ARMINIANISM OF THE CLERGY.

The "Articles of Religion" Calvinistic—They preclude the idea of the ultimate apostacy of the believer—The ground of Justification examined—The Scriptural argument—The Methodist clergy preach against their own creed as well as the teachings of Holy Scripture—Revival and Camp-meeting excitements—The doctrine of apostacy made necessary—The tendency of such teaching and doctrine is to make infidels.

DEAR SIR:—When I declare that the articles of your creed are Calvinistic, I would not be understood that they contain all the creed published to the world by John Calvin, nor the peculiarities of his creed which I consider Calvin-*ism* and therefore reject; but I mean that the doctrines of "original sin—of free will—of justification—of good works—of works of supererogation—of sin after justification," as set forth in your creed. are substantially those which *your* clergy denominate Calvinistic, and in their preaching subvert and in their practice wholly pervert and nullify.

"ART. VII. OF ORIGINAL OR BIRTH SIN.

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from ori-

ginal righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually."

The doctrine of total hereditary depravity is clearly set forth in this article—that all the offspring of Adam, through his sin, are born into the world with a depraved and corrupt nature, "very far gone from original righteousness," and "*of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.*" If this be so—and I cordially consent to it—then, so long as he is left to himself—until he is "prevented" by "the grace of God"—until this natural disposition, this proclivity of his heart to sin, is changed by the Spirit of God—he departs from God; every imagination of his thoughts is evil and that continually. This is all sound scriptural doctrine and fully sustained by your article VIII.

"Art. VIII. Of Free Will.

"The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

Neither Calvin nor any other writer ever set forth more distinctly the doctrine of man's utter inability to determine his own will to repent and to turn to God, without first being graciously moved by the Holy Spirit—that by his own natural strength and works, be they what they may, he cannot turn to God, or "prepare himself to faith and calling upon God." No writer, however Calvinistic, could more clearly set forth the scriptural doctrine of the utter inability of the sinner, unmoved by the Spirit, to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, "without the grace of God by Christ preventing" [*i. e.*, working in him

beforehand], that he may have a good will, and working with him after it has wrought that good will or inclination in him. "No man cometh unto me except it were given him of my Father." (John vi. 65.) "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John vi. 44.) No sinner, then, can produce this good will in himself, or by his self-determination alone, turn his heart towards God and exercise that saving faith in Christ. He never will feel inclined to exercise such a will—never feel the disposition to repent and turn to God, unless the Holy Spirit, through the grace of God, first forms that will and creates that holy disposition in his heart; and every movement he makes towards God is produced by that grace "working with him." He can only work out (*i. e.*, *manifest*—demonstrate) what God works within, to will and to do of his own good pleasure. So long as that grace works in him *he will* work out and work on—and that grace will not leave him, you admit, so long as he works out. Where is there a place left for him to fall from this saving grace and this gracious faith? It was freely bestowed without merit—and will it be withdrawn because the subject is without merit?

But who ever heard this doctrine stated from a Methodist pulpit, unless to be denounced as Calvinistic, pernicious, "originating in hell," &c. Who ever heard the sovereignty of God, and the sinner's total depravity and utter inability, preached in a Methodist camp or revival meeting?

Consistent with this evangelical doctrine of grace without works of merit, and therefore *sovereign grace* is your "Calvinistic" doctrine of justification by faith *alone*.

"Art. IX. Of the Justification of Man.

"We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not

for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."

This article is pure gold. It is the only hope of Adam's ruined race, the only sheet-anchor of our hope in the wrecking storms of life's ocean—and it reaches unto, and is buried in the cleft of the Rock of ages within the veil.

It teaches that our justification before God does not rest upon ourselves—upon our own merit, or upon any thing we have done or *may do*, but solely, wholly, surely, and eternally upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ, imputed to us when we, being graciously moved and assisted by the Holy Spirit, flee to Christ and accept of his sacrifice as our sin-offering. Truly is it added, "that we are justified by faith *only* is a most wholesome doctrine and *very full of comfort.*"

Your article touching good works is as "Calvinistic" and scriptural, as wholesome and full of comfort, as the last, and very appropriately follows it.

"Art. X. Of Good Works.

"Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgments; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit."

Good works, then, are not the ground of faith—are not the procuring cause of faith—do not superinduce faith, *nor preserve one in the exercise of faith*, any more than the apple hanging upon the branch produced the root of the tree that bears it—than it produced the sap that caused the bud from which it was pushed forth to swell, or made the leaf that covers it; nor does that apple produce the sap or the influences that

are ripening it for the master's use. As the apple is the produce, the result, the fruit of these causes (*i. e.*, the root, the tree, the sap), so good works are the fruits, the inevitable and inseparable results of inwrought faith; they are not a part of our justifying righteousness before God—though they are pleasing in his sight and acceptable to him—nor an element of faith; but they are the *fruits* of faith, and follow after justification; they do not produce faith in the heart, much less preserve faith in the heart, "but they spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as [the character of] a tree is discerned by its fruit."

I accept this allusion to a fruit-bearing tree. Who gave to the apple-tree its character? Who made it an apple-tree, instead of a brier? Who gave to it that peculiar nature, causing it to bear sweet apples rather than sour ones? Who gives it vitality? Who sends the life-blood through its thousand veins, vitalizing every limb and twig, and causing it to bud, and blossom, and nourish, and bear fruit for the benefit of man and to the glory of God's matchless wisdom? Can that tree change its own nature, transform itself at pleasure into a crabbed thorn this year, and back again into a royal red-pippin the next? Can it bear the delicious sweet this, and the bitter sour next year? God, who gave it its peculiar nature, alone can change it, but does he so act in the government of the vegetable world? Did he ever thus change the nature of fruit-bearing trees, so that man could "gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles?" It was his own sovereign pleasure that prompted him to have compassion upon one of Adam's depraved and ruined offspring, prompted him to incline his will to run after him—to change his wicked disposition, freely justify him, *when ungodly, by his grace*, melt his hard heart into penitence, cleanse it by the

blood of his Son, renew and sanctify it, and by his Holy Spirit impress the royal seal upon it—sealing it "unto the day of redemption," as the purchase of a Saviour's blood, and the travail of a Saviour's soul? If he did all this when we were sinners—when he saw no merit in us, will he undo it all—nullify his acts and stultify his promises, because he still sees no merit in us, no righteousness meritorious in his sight? We have to do with no such God; rather, no such God has to do with us. The sinner cannot of himself change his own disposition, or regenerate his own heart. As well might the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots. God made the world, God alone can unmake it. God alone has power to regenerate the sinner's heart, and he alone can unregenerate it—turn it back into the chaotic darkness and natural vileness of its primeval state. But he never began a good work in man's heart to treat thus—he never laid the foundations of a tower, and, through the lack of ability or change of intention or inclination, left it to shame his forecast or reproach his judgment.

This fact is incontrovertibly settled by your creed. "Good works are the fruits of faith, and *follow after* justification." Then so long as the heart is justified, it will evidence it by good works. A good tree will bear good fruit. It may not bear *so much* fruit one season as another, or *so good* fruit, if you please; various circumstances may conspire to prevent it; but it will bear *some* fruit—it will show some evidence of vitality; and one thing is certain, the little fruit, or the insipid and imperfect fruit, it may bear one year or a number of years, does not change the *nature* of the tree. It is still a sweet apple-tree, if there be but one little shrivelled apple upon it this year, and it is a sweet apple, whatever there is of it, though not so delicious as it might be.

Your article touching works of supererogation is also

sound. You justly teach that, "When we have done all that is commanded [which none of us, and no man living or dead ever did], we are unprofitable servants." *Therefore, our remaining in a state of justification or regeneration does not depend upon our good works, or our profitableness*, which is also true. Touching sin after justification, your article is faultless. It reads,—

"XII. Of Sin after Justification.

"Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification: after we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent."

There is nothing "*un*-Calvinistic" in this. If construed by *the teachings* of the previous articles noticed, it only teaches that we may sin after our justification; and I would go further and say, we all have sinned since our justification, and we all do sin, and that daily; and we shall need to pray, and with tears of repentance, the prayer our Saviour taught his disciples, "Forgive us our trespasses," every day we continue in the flesh; and every child of God will need to pray it with tears

"Till prayers and tears shall end."

It also truly teaches that every sin thus committed, is not against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable; and, therefore, there is room for repentance, and we should repent. Your article does not define in what the sin against the Holy Ghost consists. None but God knows when the sinner passes that Rubicon of hope and mercy.

It says, "After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God rise again and amend our lives."

Let us inquire closely into the meaning of this passage; for unless the possibility of the final apostacy and damnation of a child of God is taught in this solitary passage, it is not taught in your creed or Discipline! Let it be granted that every sin is a departure from God. I have granted that all Christians do sin, and sin daily; and he that saith he hath no sin is a liar, and the truth is not in him. All Christians can sing, with the spirit and the understanding, such sentiments as these, that abound in our books of spiritual songs:

> "How oft, alas! this wretched heart
> Has *wandered from* the Lord!
> How oft my roving thoughts *depart*,
> Forgetful of his word;
> Prone to wander; Lord, I feel it—
> Prone to leave the God I love."

But does the above passage teach the possibility of the true Christian ever falling *beyond* the grace of God? To suppose so, would be to suppose that this article stultifies all the teachings of the four preceding articles, and even palpably contradicts itself; for it says, those who thus sin "may, by the *grace* of God, rise again and amend their lives." To say that a Christian may fall *beyond* the grace of God, and yet, *by* the grace of God rise again would be a solecism, and then it would be in direct conflict with the teaching of God's word.

For in the case *supposed*, in the 6th and 10th chapters of Hebrews (it is one and the same supposition in both chapters), it positively declares that there would be no place *for repentance* left to the offender; that he would cast himself beyond the circumference of God's mercy. The passage, then, affords no probable ground upon which to build the doc-

trine of the possibility of the ultimate apostacy and damnation of a regenerated and redeemed soul.

It is a guard against the Antinomianism that was so prevalent when this was written. It simply states the scriptural doctrine, that Christians may sin, and that they may repent; that they may fall into sin—fall below their Christian privileges, and depart from grace given—from the ardor of their first love; abuse God's favors; and yet by his grace be brought back to an amendment of life, and the light of God's countenance.

The idea of a believer's final apostacy is not intimated in this article in the faintest manner; there is nothing bearing the semblance of such a doctrine. To say that this article gives support to such a doctrine, is to affirm that the article is *contradictious*. Its teachings are as scriptural, as "wholesome, and as full of comfort" as the preceding ones.

Peter sinned when he denied his Saviour *thrice*, and "fell," but not beyond God's grace. He was in a state of faith, and consequently of justification and regeneration, while fallen; for the Saviour, foretelling him his sin, said, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not;" and did it fail? Did not the Father hear the Son, whom he heareth always? And why did the Saviour suffer Satan thus to sift Peter? For the same reason he permits Satan to sift his children now—to sift the chaff out of him. Peter was an Arminian, and he needed to be converted—not regenerated in heart, but converted from a false doctrine. He fancied he was strong enough to stand alone—to keep himself, and that he had all along kept himself, and must in all future time keep himself, as thousands of professed Christians imagine they must keep themselves Christians, by their good works and religious exercises and duties. Christ knew that Peter needed to be converted from this idea; for such a doctrine robbed him of

part of his glory, and would depreciate the value of his atonement and power in the eyes of Peter; and then Peter might go forth and preach, as others do, if a man can keep himself a Christian, he can make himself one.

The Saviour said unto Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Did he do it? If any one doubts, let him turn to the first letter he ever wrote, and see if he does not "strengthen" them, even in the salutation itself. Read it, and see how it grinds into fine dust the doctrine of standing by works, and of keeping in faith by keeping in works.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet. i. 3–5.)

Notice the richness of the doctrine, begotten according to his "*abundant mercy*"—bless God for that—"unto a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven for you, who *are kept*." Yes, there it comes—"are kept;" and bless God for that—but it was dear experience to poor Peter! Are kept by the power of whom, Peter? of one another? of good works? of one's own strength? No, no. Power of the angels in heaven? It would be a fearful hope, for angels have fallen. No, "power of God." Aye; there is the rock in the promise. Through what medium does God exert this power? "Through faith." And how long does God promise to exert it to keep us? "Unto salvation." And how does it keep us? "Ready to be revealed in the last time." Well may we rejoice, who build on such a rock as this. But, Peter, are you sure

that this faith, of which God is the author and finisher, will not fail in some instance, when it is tried, as it were, in the fire? Hear his answer: "Wherein [in the fact that *we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*] ye greatly rejoice (though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations); that the trial of your faith, being *much more precious* than [the trial] of gold that perisheth, though it [your faith] be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Can gold be destroyed by fire? The intenser the heat of the crucible the purer the gold that comes from it. But the trial of the Christian's faith is "*much more* precious."

Methodist preachers certainly do not find a ground for their doctrine from the CREED of the Discipline. And when they preach apostacy, as they do, they preach contrary to the express teachings of their articles of religion! Let this be remembered, and urged upon them. They do not find it in the ritual of baptism; for that supposes every one baptized to be spiritually regenerated at the same time—to be introduced into vital union with Christ their head, and, consequently, made partakers of the life of Christ, which is everlasting. It supposes them introduced into the new covenant of God's grace, and their titles to all its blessings *sealed* to them by their baptism. But that is an everlasting covenant, which, unlike the old one, never can be broken. All who are sealed in that covenant are "sealed unto the day of redemption." But the ritual teaches that all who are baptized are thereby introduced into the number of God's "elect children." "Grant that the persons now to be baptized may receive the fulness of thy grace, and ever *remain in* the number of thy faithful and *elect children*," &c. The same sentence closes the prayer used upon the baptism of infants. Cer

tainly no one can remain in the number of the elect, unless previously introduced into that number.

Whatever views we may have upon the subject of election, we are agreed—for all agree in this—that God knows, in a particular sense, all his *elect* children. "The foundation of God standeth *sure*, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." The "elect children" are given to the Son by the Father; they are his to keep until he maketh up his jewels. He calls them his sheep; for they are no longer goats: and he says of such, "My sheep hear my voice, and I *know them*, and they *follow* me; and I give unto them eternal life, and *they shall never perish*, neither *shall* any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and none [or no one] is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." At the last day he will be able to say, as he did before his death, "Of all the Father hath given me have I lost none, save the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." But Judas never was a sheep—never more than a *professed disciple;* for, said the Saviour, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a *devil?*"

Not one of those whom Christ knows as his "elect children" will be found upon the left hand, or sentenced to depart, at the last day. Thousands of ministers and members will be found there who were confident they would be accepted because of their works; for these they plead, but Christ never knew them as his regenerated children. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied [preached] in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Every sect in Christendom plead that because there have been revivals among them—wonderful works done, and numberless sinners gathered within *their* pale—therefore they are churches

of Christ. So reasoned these, but Christ never knew one of them as his. "Then will I profess unto them I *never knew you;* depart from me." This scripture must conclusively settle the question in all candid minds, waiving all discussion whether it were *possible* for a child of God to be lost, that no child of God ever will be lost!

There is only one expression in the baptismal office which may seem to imply a doubt on the mind of some, viz.: "And our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised, in his holy word, to grant all those things that we have prayed for; which promise he, for his part, will most surely keep and perform. Wherefore, after this promise made by Christ, you must also faithfully, for *your* part, promise, in the presence of this whole congregation, that you will renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's holy word, and obediently keep his commands."

A word will explain all this *conditional salvation.* As I have shown in the letter on Baptism, the whole office for baptism supposes no one regenerated before baptism. *The Discipline has no office for the baptism of believers!* It supposes all to be regenerated, introduced into the number of God's elect children and into the new covenant of grace, and all its blessings sealed to them in and by baptism. See the prayer referred to above—"Give thy Holy Spirit to these persons *that they may be* born again, and *be made* heirs of everlasting salvation;" thus teaching that they never had previously received the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit. The language I am discussing, then, only binds them, on their part, to renounce the devil, &c., that they may receive the promised grace. There is popery enough in the form, but there is no Arminianism in the *doctrine*—it gives no countenance to the doctrine of falling from saving grace. Where, then, do Methodist preachers find their commission to preach

justification by works, from which ground the doctrine of the possibility of a genuine Christian's final apostacy and damnation can be concluded? Not from the creed, not from the ritual—I hereby exonerate the Discipline from giving the least favor to such an idea. It positively *forbids the possibility of such a doctrine.* It cannot exist in any system of theology which recognizes the vital doctrine of justification by faith alone, and especially when joined with the article upon "free will" as it stands in your Discipline. If any one claims that Mr. Wesley taught it, I will hold myself bound to show that Mr. Wesley stultifies himself—that his teachings are *contradictious.*

THE ARGUMENT FOR JUSTIFICATION ALONE BY FAITH IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST, FROM REASON AND SCRIPTURE.

Reason teaches that our salvation must rest upon one of three grounds:

1. Upon our own righteousness alone, or
2. Upon the righteousness of Christ alone, or
3. Partly upon our own righteousness, and partly upon Christ's.

It cannot rest upon our own righteousness: 1st, According to the Articles of Religion; for Art. XI. endorses the teaching of Christ in these words, "When ye have done *all* that is commanded you, say we are *unprofitable servants*," and Art. IX. declares that we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. 2d, According to the Scriptures—"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his

grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Tit. iii. 4–7.) "And be found in him, not having *mine own* righteousness, which is of the law [works], but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil. iii. 9.) 3d, The law of God by which we must be justified will only be satisfied by a perfect obedience—a perfect righteousness. It must find that either in ourselves or in our substitute — our SURETY. It cannot find it in ourselves — we have all transgressed it ten thousand times, and we still continue to violate its letter, "and with the flesh serve the law of sin." "Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, * * * for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii. 20, 23.) "Christ is become of none effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are *fallen from grace*." Those, then, who depend upon the law or works of righteousness, in whole or in part, for justification in the sight of God, make Christ of none effect—reject the righteousness and atonement of Christ, and despise and fail of his grace.

Our sole ground of justification, then, must rest upon the righteousness of Christ alone, imputed to us.

Christ is our Surety if we accept him, and the law, failing to find the righteousness it requires of us—which we owe to it—must look to our Surety, and if it fails to find it in him, we fall under its penalty. But, bless God, it can harm us not until the righteousness of Christ fails or is found imperfect.

Wonderful and glorious plan! We are Christ's sin, and he is our righteousness—our sins are imputed to him, and his righteousness is imputed to us!

"Arise! my soul, arise,
Shake off thy guilty fears—

The bleeding Sacrifice
In thy behalf appears;
Before the throne my Surety stands
My name is written on his hands!"

The scape-goat and the lamb of the sin-offering were types of Christ. See how clearly and beautifully they taught. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness," where he will not be seen any more. Thus teaching that the great Sacrifice upon whom our sins are laid will for ever put away our sins.

"My soul would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my crime.
Believing I rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing his bleeding love."

But what say the Scriptures touching the imputed righteousness of Christ?

His righteousness is imputed to us when we believe in him, accept him as our substitute, our Surety, our Saviour; and is therefore called the "righteousness of faith". "And he [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it [*i. e.*, the righteousness of faith] shall be imputed,

if we believe in him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered [suffered] for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Now we have no ground to fear, for his righteousness is perfect—finished—everlasting—and all his righteousness is ours. And this is the name whereby he shall be called, "The Lord our Righteousness;" and blessed are they who put their trust in him.

Let us look at the apostle's illustration of this imputed righteousness—how the law looks to another to discharge the debt of obedience we owe it. He alludes to the law of marriage, and I accept it. Suppose, if you please, a young lady is impoverished and in disgrace through the improvidence or sins of her parents. She has incurred debts to the amount of thousands, and has nothing to pay—she never can discharge them. The law of imprisonment for debt is in force, and she can be incarcerated for life, at any hour her creditor sees fit. Her condition is hopeless, for the creditor is unrelenting. The son of a Rothschild sees her, pities her, loves her, offers her his hand in marriage. She hesitates, fears and trembles, because of the claims of the law upon her for her debts. He points to his immense wealth, which will be holden for her debts, provided she consents to marry him; he explains to her how the law will, *can* no longer look to her for payment, but to him, as her husband—that her debts are imputed to him, and his wealth is imputed to her. She fearfully asks if his wealth is sufficient to discharge her liabilities. He assures her that so vast are his possessions the sum will not be missed. But she will needs be constantly—daily—making debts; she must be supported, and she has nothing to pay. He again assures her that his property will not only be holden for all her past indebtedness, but also for all the debts she

will incur while she lives; and all these cannot sensibly diminish it. His love and boundless generosity overcome her. She accepts his hand, and falls into his arms—he is her temporal saviour, her husband. Now, is she not free from the law? Can it ever look to her again? Must it not look to her husband for her old debts, and for all she may incur? And is not her former reproach all removed, and does she not participate in the dignity and honor of her husband, and are they not one?

So the believer—the Christian—is married to Christ, says Paul. He was once in disgrace, depraved through the sins of our first parents. He was in debt to the law ten thousand talents, and had nothing to pay, and he must ever incur indebtedness to it while he lives. He was in danger of being shut up in the law's prison-house of eternal despair. He was vile and unlovely as he was wicked, possessed of nothing to commend him to the favor or even pity of any one; but Jesus passed that way, saw him, and, strange to say, *loved* him, and offered him his hand in marriage; to make him one with himself—joint-heir with him in all his infinite possessions, and raise him to glory, honor, and eternal life, at his right hand. His love secures the sinner's love, and he accepts the gracious, unmerited gift. In Scripture phrase, he is married to Christ, and the law relinquishes its claims upon the sinner, and looks evermore to Christ for all past, present, and future indebtedness incurred by him. There is no possible chance for the released to fall back into the grasp of the law while Christ lives; for the marriage contract provides against that. He is made *one* with Christ, and Christ, therefore, becomes his life; his life is hid with Christ in God, and the pledge of Christ to him is, because I live you shall live also. And more; he is adopted into God's family of redeemed ones as a child, and made brother to Christ. He no more fears the

law, for he is no more under it, but under grace. Christ is his law, being made the end of the law for righteousness to him. The child of God is for ever released from his bondage of fear on account of the threatenings of the law. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage *again to fear*, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby ye cry, 'My Father.'" That man or woman who is still under the bondage of fear, is in a state of condemnation. Where is there a place for his falling short of salvation? Was not the believer safe, and saved evermore, the hour he first believed?

Can he lose his spiritual life through the wiles and deceit or malice of the devil? How can it be supposed, since Christ is his life? Can the devil harm or destroy Christ? But his "life is hid"—from the grasp of the enemy who would destroy it, of course—where? "With Christ *in God*." Can old Satan find it now? He could not so much as find the body of Moses, which God, for some wise purpose, sent an angel to hide, though he spared no pains, and endeavored to force the angel to discover it to him; but he did not succeed. Can he, then, find the Christian's life? Can he force the Almighty to surrender it? Can he, at the head of his dark legions, carry by storm the bulwarks of heaven, and pierce through all the serried rank of angelic legions; through cherubim and archangels that form the throne and body-guard of the Eternal, and lay open a Father's heart—force from the Saviour's hand the ransomed, blood-washed soul of a redeemed saint? And yet all this Satan would have to do to bring to ruin one child of God. Surely none can pluck him out of the Father's hand. But will every one so hid at last be saved? "And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then will we also appear with him in glory."

But cannot Satan by his cunning devices cheat him out of

his will to his eternal possessions? Not unless he can fob Christ of his also. Christ *gave* him a *deed*—not a mere title-bond, as Arminians would have it—to eternal life; "to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading," that is reserved in heaven for him;—strange to say, made him an heir of God himself, *i. e.*, of all that God possesses to bestow; and, in order to make it sure—so that his title could never be questioned or destroyed—he made him *joint-heir* with himself, and so we are, if believers, "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." Then the Christian's title, to day, is just as good, and just as safe and secure as is that of Jesus Christ. What Christian will not rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory at this glorious promise and provision? "Truly, the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not;" nor do the carnal-minded understand either the value or the tenure by which we hold our spiritual possessions; but we know them: for it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of [carnal] man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him. But God hath revealed them unto *us* by his Spirit." And it is the glorious prospect of these things secured to us, not upon our own works or worthiness, but the abounding grace of God, and the sure word of his promise, that cheers our courage by the way; that weans us from the idolatry of this world's perishing wealth; that supports us in bereavements; that gladdens us in solitude, affliction, and gloom; that fills our hearts with gladness, and our lips with praise, and our eyes with visions of glory in the hour of death.

But does the soul that has been all his life in bondage to works still ask, "May we not be separated by the great enemy, or in some unforeseen way separate ourselves from the love of Christ?"

Hear the apostle's answer: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 28–39.)

This passage puts it out of the power of the man himself to separate himself; for if he is not included in the first enumeration, he is swept by "any other creature," for he is a creature. It is perfectly monstrous to suppose that one who has tasted of the love of Christ, which passeth understanding, been freed from the condemnation of the law and the terror of God's

wrath, should desire to be separated from that love, rest again under that curse, and experience the forebodings of that wrath. It is not supposable. Then, the true Christian would not if he could, and could not if he would, be separated from the love of Christ. He is married to Christ, and there is no divorce in heaven for such marriages. He has been grafted into Christ, and become inseparably united to him. He is a member of Christ's body, and that body cannot be maimed. He has entered into the new and everlasting covenant, and it cannot be broken. He has tasted of the tree of life, which grows in the midst of the paradise of God, and must live for ever.

"But there are very many who say they have been Christians more than twenty times, who are now outrageous sinners—bold, blasphemous, and acknowledged infidels." I am not surprised at this. I would expect such to be infidels. I never knew an infidel who had not been made so by Arminianism;—had fallen from grace a few times—just enough to disgust and sicken him with the name of religion.

What says God's word concerning all such characters? "He that saith I *have known* him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (1 John ii. 4.)

I have translated the second verb in the *perfect* tense, because it is in the perfect tense in the original, and all scholars will agree in this. This, then, is its explicit teaching: If any man says that he once knew Christ, once was a Christian, and does not now love him, and is not now endeavoring to keep his commandments, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him. There are, alas! thousands of such liars; and this doctrine of apostacy and falling from grace, is the maker of them all, and is multiplying such liars by thousands each year.

OBJECTIONS TO THE PERSEVERANCE TO ALL SAINTS ANSWERED.

I am aware that there are many urged, and many which I shall not attempt to answer, for it would be in vain. Here let me say that I have no more reason to hope that I can remove all the objections to this doctrine in the mind of an *unregenerate Arminian* than I could remove all the objections and dislike in the carnal heart to the doctrine of the sovereignty of God in a sinner's salvation. The carnal heart, which is enmity against God, has *constitutional objections* to both doctrines, because they humble its pride, and leave it in the dust—they rob it of its works.

1st Objection. "Angels in heaven have fallen." We have nothing to do with angels; they do not live under the same dispensation, and Christ never died for them.

2d Objection. "Adam fell." And he rose again; and, therefore, he fell not *beyond* God's grace. Nor did he live in the dispensation that we do, nor was he in the new covenant prior to his fall. He was under "a covenant of works." God had created him innocent, and he was *to do* and *live*—remain upright by obedience, and live innocently before God.

3d Objection. In Ezek. iii. 20: "When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness and commit iniquity, * * he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered."

Ans. In the discussion of this question, we have nothing to do with the Old Testament, or covenant. That was a covenant of works, which every soul of Israel, from the greatest to the least, from the king upon his throne to the peasant, and from the high priest at its altars down to the humblest worshipper; which Moses, its first lawgiver, the meekest man who ever lived; which Aaron, its first high priest; which David, a man after God's own heart, and

Solomon, divinely inspired with wisdom, all brake. Its conditions were, *obey* and *live;* a long life and *temporal* prosperity—not heaven—were its *only* rewards; disobey and die, temporally, not eternally—die *prematurely*—lose temporal blessings. Moses had sinned, and he was not allowed to pass over Jordan; he was cut off before his eye had become dim, or his natural strength abated; the righteousness which *he had done* did not avail him and Aaron. But they were not lost. God was displeased with that old faulty covenant of works—and why? because it did not make the participants of it perfect; because all under it departed from God continually—none in the flesh could keep it.

Therefore, says Paul, "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old.

Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." (Heb. viii. 6–13.)

Here are some of the promises of this new covenant: "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear into their hearts, *that they shall not depart from me.* And *they shall be my* people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart, and one way that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them."

I, therefore, am justified in affirming, that every soul, every person once introduced into this new, this better, this everlasting covenant, will and must remain in it, and enjoy its blessings *for ever*, even though he sins through the weakness of the flesh, as all do.

The new differs from the old covenant in this: God was one of the contracting parties of that, but man, in his weakness and poverty of merit, was, alone and without a surety, the other; he was not able to meet the demands of the law, and the covenant was broken. In the new covenant, God is again one of the contracting parties, and man, in his weakness, still the other. But a help is found for him; Christ offers to become his SURETY, so that wherein he fails, as he must and will, through the weakness of the flesh, the law looks to his Surety. Thus we have a covenant based upon "better promises." It is and must be everlasting; for God is upon one side, and Christ, with and for his children, on the other. "By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better covenant." The Old Testament is, therefore, dismissed from this discussion.

4th Objection. "*In many passages in the New Testament, the apostacy and ruin of a Christian is supposed, which is thought would not be the case, unless it were at least possible,*

not to say probable. For instance, Heb. vi. 46, and Heb. x, 26–29."

It is admitted that the violation of the covenant, on his part, is supposed; and the certain and awful consequences of such a violation declared—that they would be remediless and hopeless. But it must be granted that *it is only supposed;* and it also must be admitted that there is not a passage in the whole of the New Testament that declares that a child of God can or will apostatize and be lost, unless the passages in which it is hypothecated teach it. While, on the other hand, not only the nature of Christ's atonement, the nature of the work of regeneration unchangeably wrought in the heart, and the conditions of the new covenant, and the whole scheme of recovering grace preclude the idea of such an apostacy; but, in addition to all this, there are scores of passages in the New Testament which positively and unequivocally teach that no one who truly believeth on Christ will ever come into condemnation; that not one of all given to him will be lost, and not a sheep will or can be plucked out of his hands.

But, to declare that the bare fact that the final apostacy of a Christian is supposed fully establishes the fact or the fear that such an occurrence may or will take place, proves too much, for it will establish other doctrines fully as subversive of the plan of salvation, and fully as dangerous to believe as this. Let me instance a few cases. Gal. i. 7: "But though *we* or an *angel from heaven* preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Are we therefore to conclude that Paul intended to teach the Galatians that *possibly* himself or the other *inspired* apostles, and even an angel from *heaven*—not *hell*—*might* preach a different gospel than the Holy Ghost had enabled them to

preach? Who is wedded to the doctrine of apostacy with such a love that he will grant this doctrine in order to uphold that? Again,

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men the most miserable."

Did Paul mean that *possibly* it might turn out they had hope in this life only?

But some one may say, "The possibility of apostacy is *several times* supposed." Very well, let us try the strength of this plea:

"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain."

"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised."

"If so be that the dead rise not."

"And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching in vain."

"But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen."

"If the dead rise not at all."

"If, after the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not at all?"

Thus, in one solitary chapter, the non-resurrection of the dead is hypothecated no less than *five* times, and the non-resurrection of Christ directly *twice!* Does it follow that the doctrine of the resurrection is to be questioned? The apostacy of a believer is not supposed so many times. "Why should any fact or doctrine be supposed, if there were no possibility of its being true?" I have shown you, if you believe the Bible, that it is as much your duty as mine to answer that question.

Doubtless it was for the purpose of instruction, and to show what conclusions would inevitably follow from certain premises, or seal some fact forcibly upon the mind.

Touching the resurrection, we are taught that just so cer-

tainly as that Christ rose from the dead, so certainly the dead will rise, and *vice versa*. Paul wished to impress upon the wavering Galatians, the fact that he had, by divine authority and power, preached unto them the true gospel—for any other would be a lie, preached by apostles or angels. Paul wished to teach the Hebrews the infinite superiority of the sacrifice and atonement of Christ over those of the law. Thus,

The sacrifices of the law made not those for whom they were offered perfect—sanctified them not for ever—and therefore had to be repeatedly offered; they only served to bring sin to remembrance; but

The sacrifice of Christ *for ever perfects* all those sanctified by *it;* and moreover, it being himself, who could die but once, consequently it could be offered but once. Proof:

"By the which will [*i. e.*, covenant] we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Christ *once*—" the "for all" are added words, as any one can see.

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God."

"For by one offering he *hath perfected for ever* them that are sanctified," *i. e.*, those for whom it is once offered.

"And as it is appointed unto man *once* to die, and after this the judgment, so Christ was offered to bear the sins of many," &c.

Now, what conclusion follows from this, that serves also to elucidate it? This: that should one—you may say, could one—of those sanctified by this precious blood of Christ violate his covenant, or fall back to his first estate, then there could be no more sacrifice for him—no second application of Christ's blood—no repentance—no possible salvation.

But will you say, because the apostle supposes such a case, that he meant to teach that it was possible for one redeemed to become unredeemed, or for one once sanctified

by the application of Christ's blood to his heart, to become unsanctified? Who says it, declares that the language of Paul, from the sixth to the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, is solecistical and contradictious; that he stultifies his teachings; that he denies in one verse what he teaches in the next! And who loves the possibility of a believer's ultimate apostacy so madly as to assert this?

Mark my proof: Paul distinctly asserts the superiority of the new covenant over the old, because it had a better priesthood, and

> "A sacrificer of nobler name
> And richer blood"

than had the bestial sacrifices of the law. Observe, with thankfulness and rejoicing of heart, wherein the sacrifice of Christ is better:

1. "But by his own blood he entereth into the holy place, having *obtained eternal redemption for us.*" The blood of bulls could not obtain this.

2. It "purges our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God," and this for ever. The blood of the old only served to purify the flesh, and the people departed from God.

3. "By means of his death, they which are called receive the *promise of an eternal inheritance.* The blood of bulls and goats could not secure such an inheritance.

4. By his blood the sins of the recipient are for ever put away; he is sealed by it as one of the members of the new covenant, of whom it is said, "their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more;" they are all henceforth imputed to Christ, who ever liveth to intercede for them. The old sacrifices could not for ever put away sins, and were repeatedly offered.

5. The blood of Christ perfects, not for six months—not

simply from one revival excitement to another—but perfects for ever all those to whom it is once applied, and this the blood of goats could not do.

Then, for these five considerations, there is no need for a second offering, for the sins of God's children are all remitted and for ever put away from them; and the apostle says, "Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." The eternal salvation of every blood-washed soul is secured—it is sealed unto the day of redemption.

Now, to say that such a soul can become unsanctified, and need again the application of Christ's blood to it, is to say that the offering of the blood of Christ is no better than that of bulls; for it did not, more than they, for ever put away sin—did not perfect for ever those sanctified by it. It would be saying that the offering of Christ was not equal to the offerings of the law, for these could be offered again and again for the offender, while that of Christ could not be. Thus does this doctrine of repeated and intermittent regeneration drive at the perfect and finished atonement of Christ—thus does it openly dash against and secretly undermine the rock-based pillar which bears up the salvation of a lost and sinking world.*

"Not as the world the Saviour gives;
He's an unchanging friend;
Whom once he loves, he never leaves,
But loves him to the end.

Else Satan might full victory boast;
The Church might wholly fall;
If one believer may be lost,
Then, surely, so may all."

* Those who wish to see this subject discussed at length by the author, are referred to a work on Apostacy, soon to be issued.

It is urged that the doctrine of "once in grace, always in grace" is of most baneful tendency. Methodists have been heard to say, "Why, if I just knew I would go to heaven I would take my fill of sin." This declaration is enough to show that the love of sin has never been crucified in that heart; that it is still alive to sin, and delights in sin, more than in God, and has joined the class just to keep out of hell! and such a soul is undoubtedly on the broad way to hell. Zeno, when asked, "Wherein does your philosophy make you better citizens," replied, "If all the laws were abolished, we would live as we now do." Ought not the religion of Christ—his regenerating grace—do as much for us as heathen philosophy did for its followers?

Suppose the young wife say, "If I only knew that my husband would not cease to love me, or turn me out of his house, I would take my fill of sin." Would she betray a very ardent attachment for her husband, or a pure or virtuous heart? I maintain that this doctrine is the mainspring of all Christian zeal and activity—of all good works in the sight of God.

When do Christians pray most, praise most, give most, labor most, talk to sinners most and with tears in their eyes, sacrifice most to extend the kingdom of Christ, live most consistently, let their light shine most, and glorify God most?

> "When they can read their titles *clear*
> To mansions in the skies."

The Workings and Tendency of the Doctrine of Apostacy and Re-regeneration.

Doctrines, like trees, may be known by their fruits. What ever may be affirmed to the contrary, the doctrine that a man can *un*regenerate himself rests upon the ground that he

can regenerate himself, for it implies the same power. The Ethiopian who can change his skin to pearly white can as easily change it to yellow, and back again to its native blackness, and *vice versa*. As we might expect, a system of works enters largely into the means preached for the sinner to attain justification, and works are most rigidly urged as the means by which the Christian is to keep himself in a state of regeneration. Would you be fully satisfied of this? Study calmly and dispassionately, *if you can*, one Methodist camp-meeting, or one "excitement" or "revival." Listen to the character of the preaching; the doctrines advanced; observe all the multiform and questionable appliances and ingenious expedients brought into requisition. The pulpit or stand is a Mount Sinai hung with the blackness of darkness, crested with fire, and shaken with thunderings, and wreathed with fierce lightnings; wrath and fury, "hell-fire and damnation" are the themes of sermon and exhortation. The membership must be aroused to action. The preacher says he wants to hear "a shout raised in the camp of Israel" —that the walls of Jericho never fell down until Israel raised the shout; and he never knew any thing done until some sister "*got happy*." "Lord, make these sisters here *shouting* happy, right now." What appeals follow upon this to the passions—to the affections and fears! What scenes are depicted of dying fathers, dying mothers, dying children and infants (violent sobbings), death-scenes, hell-scenes (a lady faints here, and another screams), and judgment-scenes—friends in heaven meeting fathers and mothers there, meeting children, and the dear little babes lost, there! Hear that shout—(has the *Lord* answered the prayer?)—and another—and another; and now it becomes general—the preacher's voice rises like trumpet-tone over all—"Fire! fire! Send

down fi–re!" "Baptize all this congregation in the Holy Ghost and fi–re." "Po–wer! POWER—come in thy mighty pow–er!" Now, the excitement being at the right stage, the straw being prepared, the door of the altar is thrown open, and sinners are called upon to come forward before they drop into hell. In the midst of the uproar, parents drag their excited and terrified children into the altar, and others from alarm, others from pure nervous excitement, and others from sympathy, rush forward; the altar is crowded. Now follows what some preachers call a "*sanctified row.*" The mourners are exhorted to pray mightily—and a season of prayer commences. A brother who has a strong voice is called upon to pray, and all the mourners are exhorted to pray at once, and all Christians to pray—call mightily upon God. And who can describe the scene that follows for the next half-hour—men and women, girls and boys, of all ages, are mingled and commingled in one conglomerated mass in the straw, rolling and tumbling, and throwing their arms and limbs about in every conceivable direction; forty or fifty "mourners" crying, screaming, praying—a hundred Christians, "all engaged," some praying, some shouting, some swooning, some with the powers; the shrill voice of the leader ever and anon rising above the din, calling for "fire," "power!" and the ministers shouting the loud and deep "A–men! a–men! do, Lord! Hallelujah!" This lasts until ten or eleven, with the simple variation of a song instead of a prayer, when the noise, uproar and confusion is, if possible, far greater! This is no fancy sketch; it falls far below the sad and awful reality as all will bear me witness. I appeal to the world, from which all reason and common sense has not departed—except during one of these "revivals;" I appeal to all candid, reflecting men and Christians,

Is that altar a place for young children, or for old children, or for an humble inquirer to *think* rationally, scripturally? Do they know what they are about? Theywere invited forward as *inquirers*, to be instructed—have they heard a word?—can they distinguish a solitary connected sentence? And see there—how those ministers are beating them upon their backs as though religion was a wedge to be driven in between the shoulder-blades! This is no fiction. Mourners have been driven from the altar by the force of these blows, and left with more bruised backs than hearts. The preachers and their kind friends were excited, and did not know how hard they did slap and pound them. This meeting, or camp, continues three or four days; some few of these profess, and the class-leader is in the altar the last day, and asks all who want to go to heaven, to let him put their names down on his little book—that he "wants them all to be seekers—and the Methodist Church is just the place in which to seek religion—thousands have professed religion in the Methodist Church." He gets their names, and then the meeting closes. The week following, you can read a piece of "revival news" in the *Methodist Advocate*:—

"Dear Bro. McFerrin:—The Lord has powerfully revived his work on this circuit. At our camp-meeting, which has just closed, one hundred and thirty joined the society, several of whom were *powerfully* converted! The 'old ship' is again afloat here."

In about six months after the camp-meeting, these young converts and seekers, having become wilder and wickeder than ever, a "revival meeting" is gotten up, when the same state of things observed at the camp-meeting are acted over again; and at the close of this, perhaps, the larger portion of these seekers are brought out—induced to profess regenera-

tion. They honestly think they are regenerated—they are told so. They join again, and another flaming report appears in the paper! The reader would think the whole neighborhood had been converted and joined the Methodist Church. From three weeks to three months the majority profess *un*-regeneration—they have forgotten their fears, and their excitement has worn off, and they return to their old forsaken sins, "like a dog to eat up his vomit, or a sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

Now, how many times can these be regenerated over, getting worse and worse, harder and harder, from each "fall," before they will become outright and downright infidels in the *reality* of *spiritual* regeneration, or join the Church, believing what is preached to them from the pulpit, and exhorted to them in the class, "if they expect to go to heaven they must work their own passage"—*i. e.*, observe the rules; and thus they go aboard Mr. Wesley's ship, to work their passage! Is it strange they believe in justification by works? Do we not see how vitally essential the doctrine of apostacy is to such preaching and expedients—to fit such machinery for making Christians. If any think I have colored my figures, I invite their attention to the following table of statistics published in the *Southern Christian Advocate*, a Methodist paper; and the facts were furnished by a Methodist preacher too, I expect. He founded an argument upon them against the non-pastorate policy, but I urge them in proof that these modern baptisms of fire and sanctified rows are not revivals of pure and undefiled religion—that Methodist revivals are solemn farces.

This Methodist says these figures note the result of four different meetings, and he was in each of them.

"Of those who joined our Church, 204 in number, the following table will indicate their ultimate destiny:

	Males.	Females.	Total.
"Methodists,	24	64	88
Backsliders,	45	13	58
Presbyterians,	2	14	16
Baptists,	4	4	8
Episcopalians,	0	1	1
Unknown,	3	30	33
	78	126	204

"Here we have, of 171 original members, only 88 remaining and living and dying with us, 58 gone back to the world, and 25 joined other communions."

Here, of the 204 reported converts, we find only 88 left in the society at this writing—and how many of them are still there only as seekers he does not say—and 91 gone back to the world. These figures offer food for reflection.

But does not this intermitted regeneration doctrine tend to make infidels? So far as my observation teaches me it does.

During a meeting in the town of S—— (in no respect like the one described above) I approached a young lady who was bathed in tears and in evident distress of mind. I inquired for the cause of her grief. She told me that she felt that she was a poor lost sinner—that a sense of her sins and depravity was crushing her heart. I spoke to her of Jesus, who invited just such as her to come. "Oh," said she, "I've got religion five or six times, and lost it, and I am afraid I should lose it if I should get it again;" and there was an outburst of desponding grief. "Mary," I replied, "Mary, you have been deceived—you have never yet known any thing about religion. Let it get you, and it will keep you." I reasoned away her doubts and despair, and she appeared, from that day, among the inquirers for religious instruction

and prayer. Before the meeting closed she professed a hope in Christ. "Oh, sir," said she, "if this be religion I never knew any thing about it before." Years have passed, and as often as I see her in visiting the place, I inquire, "Well, Mary, can you keep your religion? have you not lost it yet?" "You were right sir, it keeps me—I feel that *I am kept.* This is the religion I always wanted."

In a revival in the city of ——— the arm of the Lord was revealed in bringing many souls to Christ. The inquirers were numerous, and the congregations solemn. I became deeply interested in the son of a deacon of the Church, but I saw no signs of interest on his part. As the meeting was drawing to a close, I went to him in the congregation, and conversed with him; told him of my interest for him; warned him of his danger; portrayed the love of the Saviour for the guilty and lost—the work of regeneration on the heart—the joys of religion—the peace of a believer. When I paused for some sign of emotion, he turned up his eye with a sort of indescribable smile of incredulity. "You can't tell me any thing about it, sir—I have been through it all several times; I know all about it, and I can't be gotten into it again—it's of no use to talk to me." I saw the exact state of the case. He was, in heart, a confirmed infidel; he was a disbeliever in regeneration of heart—in the Christian religion; he had been galvanized a half-a-dozen times; he had belonged to the Church or society—had even again and again eaten the Lord's Supper with Christians (if indeed the table at which you eat can be considered the Lord's); he had related his feelings in the class, and been told that he was a Christian indeed; and it all gradually left him as the excitement that produced it died away his heart was where it ever was—unregenerate—ay, worse—hardened into cold unbelief and infidelity, and his damnation sealed.

These are not isolated cases, but simply types of the thousands and tens of thousands that fill the land. Go ask that universalist, that blasphemer, that outrageously wicked man who appears lost to all shame, that infidel, if they never thought of religion, and nine out of ten of them will tell you they have been regenerated from twice to five times, and are only fallen from grace! Satisfy yourself as I have, and then learn that this doctrine of intermittent regeneration—this losing religion and getting it again, and losing it and getting it every three or six months, has made, and is making, more infidels—more unbelievers in spiritual regeneration—more despisers and rejectors of the Christian religion—more hopelessly hardened sinners, than Tom Paine's Age of Reason and all the works of the French atheists. Every man who understands the first principles of the philosophy of the mind knows that infidelity is the logical consequence of the process.

Positive Scriptures against the Possibility of the Apostacy of a Believer.

I proposed to submit a few passages of Scripture that unquestionably preclude the idea of a believer's final apostacy; and my argument is, if that doctrine is claimed to be true because it is hypothecated, then are the teachings of the Scripture *contradictious*. My limits allow me to give but a few.

The strong man armed and the stronger than he.—"No man can enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house." (Mark. iii. 27.)

"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace, but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor

wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." (Luke xi. 21, 22.

Who can bind and cast out the stronger than the strong man armed?

The joy of angels.—"Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth." How can we understand this if the Christian falls from grace? Would there not be folly in such joy? Would it not be premature? Have they not learned, in watching the history of the Church 6000 years, to suspend their joy till the tried spirit of the saint mounts up in triumph to glory? (Luke xv. 10.)

The Saviour's prayer.—Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; *as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee*, that they may also be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me, and the glory which thou givest me *I have given them;* that they may *be one even as we are one;* I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." (John. xvii. 15, 20, 24.)

Can the union between the Father and the Son be dissolved? Can the devil sow dissension and coldness between the Father and the Son so that they will depart the one from the other? Can it be supposed that the Son will ever wish to sever his connection with the Father? Then, if the Saviour's prayer is answered, the union between himself and the least one of his children cannot, and will not, be dissolved. The redeemed soul will not wish to leave, the devil cannot pluck it away, and Christ will never, no never forsake.

"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. x. 13.)

> "The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose—
> I will not, I will not desert to its foes.
> That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
> I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

Religion is an anchor that parts not in the day of trial. —"That by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." (Heb. vi. 18, 19.)

The sinner is tried and condemned but once.—"There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. viii. 1, 2.)

"For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage *again to fear;* but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father" [Our Father]. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God; and if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. (Rom. viii. 15–17.)

"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 15, 16, 36.)

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall never come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. (John. v. 24.)

The implanted love of Christ unfailing.—"Love [falsely translated charity] never faileth; but whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away.

"And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. xiii. 8, 13.)

Christ the tree of life — the bread and water of life. —"This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever.

"Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (John vi. 37–54.)

"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him."

"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

"Whosoever drinketh of *this* water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John iv. 13, 14.)

The Christian a conqueror.—"All that the Father giveth me *shall come* to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

"No man can come unto me except the Father who hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

"For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world." (1 John v. 4.)

"The sinner who, by precious faith,
Has felt his sins forgiven,
Is from that moment passed from death,
And sealed an heir of heaven.

Ten thousand snares surround his feet,—
Not one shall hold him fast;
Whatever dangers he may meet,
He'll overcome at last."

Christ the Christian's life.—"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory."

"Because I live, ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.)

Regeneration will prompt obedience.—"If a man love me *he will keep* my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.)

Some profess to love, but fall away and go back to the world. Were they Christians?

"They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us they would have continued with us, but that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." (1 John ii. 19.)

The words "no doubt" were inserted by the translator.

The Christian is not of those who draw back unto perdition.—"But we are not of those who draw back unto perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of the soul." (Heb. x. 39.)

No Christian act can be forgotten.—"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and your labor of love which

ye have showed toward his name, that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister." (Heb. vi. 10.)

"Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward."

Now, if a person fall from grace and be sent to hell, how can this be true? When, or where, or how, would he be rewarded?

The Seed is planted only in the heart where it is designed to live and abide for ever. 1 Peter i. 23: "Born again of incorruptible seed, which *liveth and abideth for ever.*"

The Christian not an unfinished tower.—"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest, haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." (Luke xiv. 28.)

"Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it [*i. e.*, perfect—continue to perfect it] until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6.)

The Christian's a sure foundation.—"Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a *sure* foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste."

"Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his house upon a *rock;* and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock."

Mark, this man's house did not stand because he stood out in the storm and rain and held it up, but because it was *founded* upon the rock. Christ is the Rock of ages. We build upon him by faith in his blood, resting all our hopes

of salvation upon his righteousness alone. All other foundations are sand.

"Now, therefore, ye are *no more strangers* [not one of them who is a spiritual member—a living stone—ever will be a stranger again, or alienated], but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone, *in whom* all the building, fitly framed together [every member of this spiritual temple is indissolubly framed into Christ!], *groweth into* an holy temple *in* the Lord, *in whom* ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 19, 20.)

Surely,

"Their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies being judges." (Dan. xxxii. 31.)

Well may we sing—

> "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
> Is laid for your hopes in his excellent word!
> What more could he say than to you he hath said—
> You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?" *

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* I affectionately request all who are acquainted with a passage of Scripture which they think teaches the doctrine of a believer's apostasy and ruin, or who have an argument which they consider valid, in favor of it, or an objection against the contrary doctrine, to communicate such passages, arguments, or objections, to me, that they may be noticed, not only in the paper, but in a forthcoming book on Apostasy, its Grounds, and its Evils.

LETTER XL.

PRIMITIVE CHURCH CONSTITUTION.

Lest it be said that I have pulled down, but have put up nothing to take the place of what I have demolished, I have hastily drawn up the following Declaration of Rights, and the most prominent Articles of a Primitive Church Constitution, which I believe to be most indisputably taught in the New Testament.

That these principles can be found together, embodied in specific Articles, in any one chapter in the New Testament, I do not claim; nor can the Apostle's Creed or the acknowledged Articles of Evangelical Faith; but, like these, they run through the whole body of the teachings of Christ and his apostles; and I do maintain that the principles of Church constitution, order, and discipline are as clearly and specifically taught as are the doctrines which Christian churches are to hold and teach. Therefore men—Church rulers—have no more right to invent forms of Church government to please their own fancy, than to invent doctrines, regardless of the teachings of Christ and his apostles.

The following Constitution is not submitted as a perfect one. It is only a first rude draft to illustrate my position above, and may hereafter be given to the public in a more perfect and permanent form.

The Christian Bible-reader will find it a pleasant and profitable employment to study the teachings of Christ and his apostles, with reference to this subject, and see wherein he can amend these Articles, or strengthen them with scriptural authority.

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS.

We hold these facts to be unquestionable :—

1. That God has given to all men, for their welfare and happiness, certain natural and inalienable rights, which he designed not himself to abrogate,* or for man to concede, or tyrants to usurp.

2. That God can therefore be the author of no government, civil or ecclesiastical, which denies to man the exercise of the indefeasible rights vouchsafed to him in the charter of his creation.

3. That these (or man's natural) rights cannot be usurped, or their exercise denied him by State or Church rulers, without manifest impiety.

4. That in civil society, while the *exercise* of these rights may be modified, they cannot be conceded without sin.

5. That touching man's moral and religious duties as an individual or as a subject of Christ's kingdom, he must look alone to Christ as the only sovereign whom he is to reverence, the only master whom he is to serve, and the only king and lawgiver whom he is to obey.

6. That while the constitution and laws of a Christian Church are determined by Christ, who is the only king in Zion, yet the supreme judicial and executive powers for the administration of Church government are invested in the membership : each member having an identity of interest, of responsibility, and consequently of power.

We also hold these truths to be self-evident :—

1. That since Christianity is a revealed religion, the government of the Church must be instituted by God, and, since he can be the author of no government which denies to man the gifts of his Creator, and thus contravenes the wisdom of God in the bestowment of those gifts, that therefore Christianity secures to man the possession and exercise of all his natural rights.

2. That if it is claimed that any natural right is denied to man in the Church, as the election of his teachers, the usurper is bound to prove it by an appeal to Scriptures that positively forbid to man the exercise of that right.

3. That, therefore, man cannot justly be called upon, to produce Scriptures which expressly command him to exercise any natural right

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* It is admitted that God has a right to deny to man or to nations the exercise of these rights as a *punishment*.

in the Church, since its exercise must be granted him until it can be demonstrated that the Scriptures, by positive enactment, deny him the exercise of that right.

We hold these rights to be from man inalienable, by the charter of his creation :—

1st. FREEDOM, SOCIAL, CIVIL, AND RELIGIOUS. Freedom of thought, and the expression of thought, publicly and privately, unrestrained freedom of action, when thought and action do not infringe upon the rights of others.

2d. EQUALITY OF RIGHTS, CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS, AND THE EXERCISE OF THEM. That man is, and can be only the equal of his contemporary, and hence the claim set up by Church and State tyrants, to a charter of superiority over their fellows, to be a privileged class, invested with a "divine right," to usurp and wrest from man any of his natural rights, is a false and impious claim.

3d. THE ELECTION OF HIS RULERS. That man, in all countries, and in all governments, ecclesiastical as well as civil, has the inalienable right to elect his rulers, who are in fact his servants, and therefore those rulers must be amenable to the people for the proper discharge of the duties intrusted to them.

4th. THE CHOICE OF HIS TEACHERS. As it is man's indefeasible right in the State, to select and elect his civil and scientific teachers and instructors, it must be granted to be his right andduty to do so in the Church, unless it can be shown by the teachings of Christ and his apostles that the exercise of such a right and duty is expressly forbidden. If a class of men may claim a divine right and call to preach and to teach, so have the members of Christ's Church the "divine right" to decide both *what* shall be taught and *who* shall teach them.

5th. To admit into, censure, punish, or expel members from all governments or voluntary associations, civil, scientific, and therefore religious, according to the laws and disciplinary regulations of that government or association, and, therefore, no "divine right" is given, by "letters patent," to any man, or class of men, in Church, as the clergy or ruling elders, any more than in State, as kings or emperors, to receive into, censure, punish, or expel from the government or society whomsoever they please, censure for what cause they please, try as they please, and expel when they please. Such a government would be a crushing and degrading despotism.

We hold it to be the personal and bounden duty of every accountable person,

To acknowledge and serve God—believe in, and obey Jesus Christ—to be immersed upon a profession of that faith—to unite with a Christian Church—to participate in the Lord's Supper—and to labor for the glory of God and the extension of the Redeemer s kingdom, according to the teachings of Christ; but since these are man's individual duties, and required at his hands as acts of *personal obedience* and service, in proof of the love and loyalty of his heart, no one of them can be performed for him by another, in his unconsciousness more than in his consciousness—nor can an "indulgence" be granted to him by priest or Church to disobey any one of them altogether, or for any length of time.

Touching the source of Church government, as well as of the laws and regulations by which that government is to be administered, we hold the following proposition is sustained by the New Testament, by reason, and by the practice of primitive churches.

The teachings of Christ and of his apostles furnish sufficient principles by which to determine the peculiar form and structure of Church government, as well as all the laws and regulations necessary for its proper administration; and that those teachings also determine the number of offices, and the relative rank, powers, and duties of its officers; finally, that the first Church at Jerusalem, formed by the directions and under the eye of the Saviour, and the apostolic churches, organized by the apostles, are the authoritative models for the formation of churches for all future time: a departure from which by a religious society is a forfeiture of its claims to be considered a Christian Church, and involves its originators in the sin of impiety.

PROOFS.

"Go ye, therefore, disciple all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

COMMENTS.—This is a *specific* and therefore a *restrictive* command. It forbids those who act under it the doing of more or less than what is commanded, as the preaching of human philosophy, or speculation for the Gospel, or in connection with it. It forbids the baptism of any but believers, for no other character is specified. It forbids immersion in

the name of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. It forbids them to "teach for doctrine the commandments of men." It teaches that Christ had given all sufficient directions for the formation and government of churches. If it was incumbent upon the apostles or Christians, to organize churches, all the laws necessary for the internal regulation and discipline of his churches, as well as all Christian duties, must have been taught.

If this is denied, then it is certain that the specific terms of this commission forbid those acting under it to organize churches at all, or to enact laws and regulations for the government of such, since it forbids the apostles to teach for observance by Christians, as Christian duties, any thing which Christ had not previously commanded them! Lest they might not recall all those teachings, or teach them in their relative order, Christ gave them the aid of the Holy Spirit.

"Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak."

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and *bring all things* to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

The teachings of the apostles, then, are the teachings of Christ, and they, with those of Christ, constitute a perfect directory to ministers of all they are to teach men to observe pertaining to Christianity, and consequently of all things pertaining to the formation and government of a Christian Church. So taught Paul.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, and *thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*"

It was an essential part of the good works of Titus, as of ministers now, to preach, baptize disciples, and organize them into churches, under some form of government, and to teach them the laws and regulations by which they were to be governed. From what source was he to furnish himself with the proper doctrine to teach, and the needed reproofs, correction, and discipline to be administered? From the teachings of Paul and the other Scriptures in his possession. Paul could praise the Church at Corinth, because of its faithfulness in keeping the ordinances as he had instructed them to do.

"Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things,

and keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you." (1 Cor. xi. 2).

In writing to the Hebrews, he asserts that Christ was as faithful, at least, in all his house—his Church—as was Moses, in respect to the patterning of the old tabernacle; and the FORM and internal arrangement were the essential parts of its organization. And did Christ give no directions concerning the form and peculiar organization of his house (Church)? Did he leave it to the fancies and caprices of men to build it one story or five—to make it an aristocracy, a monarchy, or a crushing despotism?

It is Christ's prerogative and office "to be head over all things to his Church, which is his body," &c.; and has he not determined the *form* of his body and the arrangement of his members? He is also represented as the only King and Lawgiver in Zion.

WAS THERE A CHURCH OR KINGDOM OF CHRIST IN EXISTENCE, PRIOR TO THE DAY OF PENTECOST? We maintain that there was, most unquestionably. John called upon the Jews to repent because it had come—"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven *has come*." This is the acknowledged rendering of the verb translated "is at hand."

When Jesus began to preach, he declared that the kingdom of heaven had come. He declared that the law and "the prophets prophesied until John; since that time, the kingdom of God is preached, and every man *presseth into it*." How could they press into the kingdom or organization that was not in existence?

"But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." This explains the evident mistranslation in our version. The Pharisees inquired *when* the kingdom of God should come. He replied, "Neither shall they say lo, here! or lo, there! for behold, the kingdom of God is," *not within those wicked Pharisees*, but "*among you*," *i. e., in your very midst*, and ye cannot observe or perceive it, so great is your blindness! He told them at another time, that "the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

I could multiply similar proofs; but I close this discussion with two simple but unanswerable arguments.

The kingdom of God—of heaven—the Church of Christ, was in existence prior to Christ's ascension and the day of Pentecost.

A kingdom is a definite organization—a government.

But there can be no organization or government without laws.

Laws, again, determine the form and character of the government.

But no one has a right to enact the laws of a government but its supreme ruler, or rulers; or of a kingdom, but its rightful king.

Jesus Christ is the sole and supreme ruler in his government; the only king in his Zion; therefore, he himself must have organized and given a form of government to his Church, or kingdom, before his ascension, or the day of Pentecost.

And, since we have his teaching, either from his own lips, or through the apostles, in the New Testament, therefore the New Testament contains the principles, laws, and directions, sufficient to determine the peculiar form of organization Christ intended for his churches to have, and we may also conclude, that the Church which Christ himself organized in Jerusalem, is an authoritative model to be patterned after until the end of time.

Another Argument.

"The institutes of a kingdom cannot be in existence before the kingdom itself is set up. The Lord's Supper was an institute of the kingdom of Christ before his death; therefore the kingdom of Christ was set up before his death.

"Did not a Church of Christ, called disciples, exist before the death of Christ? What is a Church of Christ but a company of disciples of Christ? Did not Christ direct an offended brother to tell this Church of the matter, if he could not settle it in private (before his death); and direct this Church to exclude the member so offending if he would not hear the Church? How could such a direction be given, and no Church of Christ be in existence? Therefore, the kingdom or Church of Christ existed before his death.

"The first dawn of the morning belongs to the day. The kingdom of Christ began with the beginning of gospel preaching and ordinances and when Christ the king was introduced to Israel."

The Testimony of History.

"The new churches everywhere formed themselves *on the model* of the mother Church at Jerusalem.—*Giesseler*, vol. i., § 29.

"*That form* of the primitive churches which was derived from the Church of Jerusalem, erected and organized by the apostles themselves, must be accounted divine.—*Mosheim*, vol. i. p. 81.

"This Church [of Jerusalem], so constituted, is the acknowledged pattern or model, by which other Christian churches were formed. * *

Hierarchalists, with others, say the New Testament presents *no settled form of Church government.* But the Judean churches were considered as models by Paul, who praised the Thessalonians for following their example: nor were the customs of different people allowed to influence churches in different provinces, but the teachers of religion throughout the world were to follow Paul's example. This model imitated, occasioned a harmony in practice for 100 years. If there is no form, then the Scriptures cannot be a perfect rule of faith and practice; each province, town, or society, may legislate without giving offence to the King of Zion; and consequently, every age, from new customs, might have a new form of Church government. Yet Jesus Christ has forbidden any thing to be added to his word; and one feature of the *Man of Sin* is, that he should "change laws in God's temple;" but every plant not of scriptural authority shall be taken away, and every innovator in Christ's kingdom shall meet with his displeasure. The unity enjoined, the discipline established, the example left, and the accountability of each servant for his conduct in the service of God, prove there is a settled law for their guidance. See "Maclean on the Commission," and "Glass's King of Martyrs."—*Orchard's History of Foreign Baptists in all Ages*, pp. 6, 7.*

I conclude this discussion in the language of Wm. Hague, with the substitution of one or two words:

"However honored may be the history of any Church on earth, however far it may be extended, with whatever names it may be distinguished and adorned, its pretence of being, as to its outward constitution, the true Church of Christ, is nullified by the fact that it is a Church established by human device. So far as it is established by man, so far it is a part of a human system, and just so far, constitutionally considered, it has lost the character of a true Church of Christ. So that the mere fact that a Church is established by the legislation of a man, or men, furnishes a sufficient reason why Christians should leave it, as having in its constitution those elements which are at war with the spiritual nature, the primary principles, and the high moral ends of the Christian dispensation."—*Chris. Statesman.*

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* This is an invaluable history, and should be in the library of every Christian man.

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

SECTION 1.—A Church of Christ is a company of believers immersed upon a profession of an evangelical faith, voluntarily associated, on terms of perfect equality, in a covenant or agreement, implied or expressed, to receive the New Testament as their only rule of faith and practice, and to be governed by its teachings in all things.

SEC. 2.—A particular Church may consist of any number not less than "two or three" gathered together in the name of Christ.

SEC. 3.—None should be admitted into the Church, or be permitted to receive any of its ordinances, except by baptism upon a profession of faith in Christ.

SEC. 4.—Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, and receiving its authority directly from Christ, it is accountable to him alone.

THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE

See Matt. iii. 2–13: John baptized none except upon a profession of faith in Christ.

John iv. 1: Jesus made disciples before he baptized them.

Matt. xxviii. 19, 20: None were to be baptized before they had been discipled, or taught to observe secondary duties before the primary ones had been discharged—as faith in Christ, and baptism.

John iii. 5: No man is entitled to membership in the kingdom of God on earth, except he be a believer in Christ—regenerated.

Acts i. 15 : The first Church in Jerusalem was composed of disciples.

Acts ii. 37, 41, 46, 47 : All who were added to the existing Church on the day of Pentecost, were baptized believers—*saved persons*.

Acts viii. 12 : The whole Church at Samaria consisted of baptized believers.

2. Cor. vi. 14–18 : Paul positively forbids the amalgamation of believers and unbelievers in the Church of God, and enjoins a rigid separation between the world and the Church.

Gal. iii. 26, 27 : Paul declared that the Church of Galatia were all the children of God by faith in Christ, and that all had put on Christ —publicly professed their obedience to him—in baptism.

Gal. iv. 22–31 : Unregenerate children and sinners—typified by Hagar and Ishmael, who were born by natural generation, have no claims to Church membership with believers—Abraham's spiritual seed typified by Isaac, who was supernaturally born.

1 Cor. i. 2 : Paul addressed this Church as a company of sanctified persons—saints. See address to churches in all the Epistles.

Christ designed that there should be the most perfect equality among his disciples ; that, united together as brethren, they should all enjoy equal rights and equal privileges—that there should be no privileged order or class of men, and that no factitious distinction, as Rabbi, or Doctor of Divinity, should either be granted or recognized among them.

"Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ ; and all ye are brethren," *i. e.*, equal.

"Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master, Christ. But he that is the greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matt. xxiii.)

Rom. vi. 1–6 : All the members of the Church at Rome had been baptized into Christ—into public allegiance to him as their Saviour and king—into his death—a promise of conformation to it, by a representation of it by burial in water ; had risen to walk in a new life, &c.

The proof to establish Secs. 1 and 3 can be almost indefinitely increased.

To sustain Secs. 2 and 4 see Matt. xviii. 20. To be gathered together in the name of Christ, may mean in the capacity of a Church ; See 1 Cor. v. 4, which undoubtedly means in Church capacity.

Col. iv. 15 : There was a Church in the house of Nymphas, which may have consisted of only his own family.

Rom. xvi. 19: There was a Church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila; and there was *the Church* at Jerusalem, and *the churches* of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria; of Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, Philippi; and the Seven Churches in Asia, which were but a comparatively short distance apart. These passages show conclusively that a Christian Church is not an extensive hierarchy—a consociation or consolidated organization of all the particular churches in a whole kingdom or country, as *the* Methodist E. Church, the Protestant E. Church, or Presbyterian churches of North America; or a national religious establishment, like the Episcopal Church of England, the Presbyterian national Church of Scotland, or the Lutheran Church of Germany, &c. "My kingdom is not of this world," said Christ.

If bodies of the above character are not Christian churches, we ought not to call them so, or recognize them before the world by a recognition of their ordinances or officers, as receiving their baptisms and ordinations as valid, or inviting their ministers into our pulpits, and thus say to their followers and to the world, "These men are the official ministers of Christian churches, hear ye them."

"They (the bodies above named) are *not* churches, and God has given us no leave to call them so."—*Crowell's Ch. Man.*, p. 36.

Historical and other Authority.

The Earliest Writers.—Tertullian says, "*Ubi* tres ecclesia *est*, *licet laici*," three are sufficient to form a Church, although they be laymen.

Dionysius Alexandrinus wrote to Stephen, Bishop of Rome, thus: "Understand now, O brother, that *all the churches* throughout the East, yea, and beyond, are united together, which aforetime were divided and at discord among themselves. All the governors of *the churches* every where are at one," &c.—*Eusebius*, l. 7, c. 3 (*vide passim*).

Irenæus: Ea quæ est in quoque loco ecclesia," that Church which is in any place.

Socrates Scholasticus: "For this noisome pestilence beginning from *the churches* of Alexandria." "Not only presidents and elders of the *churches*."

Ægisippus: When they were gone, it is said they were rulers over—*i. e.*, officers in—"churches."—*Eusebius*, l. 3, c. 17.

Sozomenus: Partly to set in order whole churches.

IRENÆUS, "All *the churches* of Asia."—*Eusebius*, l. 4, 6. 13.

EUAGRIUS: Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, wrote in a letter to John, bishop of Antioch: "Christ hath granted peace unto *the churches* under heaven." "Seeing that as well your *churches* as ours."—*Euagrius*, lib. 1 c. 6.

CLEMENT, Bishop of Alexandria: "The congregation of the elect I call the Church."

Ignatius, Cyprian, and Origen, when speaking of a particular congregation, call it a *Church*, as "the Church in Alexandria," "the Church in Smyrna," "the Church in Athens," and in Antioch. The above are the oldest and all the writers of note in the first six centuries, and the like phrases abound throughout their writings. No such thing as a national Church, or a consolidated hierarchy was known in these centuries, but the seeds that afterwards ripened into such an establishment were beginning to be sown. "After the idea of the Mosaic priesthood had been adopted in the Christian Church, the clergy, as was natural, elevated themselves far above the laity.—*Giesseler*, vol. i. p. 69.

"What is the Church? It is not the clergy, it is not the councils, still less is it the Pope. It is *the Christian people*, it is the *faithful*."—*D'Aubigné*.

See also definition of Church of Christ in Methodist Discipline, Book of Common Prayer, Augsburg Confession, and confessions of all the reformed churches; it is universally defined "cœtus credentium," a *company of believers*.

PRIMITIVE CHURCHES WERE INDEPENDENT BODIES.

[A. D. 117–193.] "*All congregations were independent of one another*, although some had a peculiar reputation more than others, on account of many circumstances, *ex. gr.*, their apostolic origin, the importance of the city to which they belonged, or because they were mother churches."—*Gieseler*, ch. iii. § 53.

THEY WERE BODIES OF BAPTIZED BELIEVERS.

[A. D. 100.] "*All the churches in those primitive times were independent bodies;* or none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other. It is as clear as the noonday, that all Christian churches had equal rights, and were, in all respects, on a footing of equality."

"During a great part of this [the 2d] century, all the churches continued to be, as at first, independent of each other, or were connected by no consociations or confederation; each Church was a kind of little independent republic, governed by its own laws."

"Although the ancient mode of Church government seemed, in general, to remain unaltered [A. D. 300–400], yet there was a gradual deflection from its rules, and an approximation towards the form of monarchy."

"This change in the form of ecclesiastical government was followed by a *corrupt state of the clergy.*" —*Mosheim*, vol. i. pp. 86, 142, 201. See also, *Neander, Coleman, Orchard, passim.*

"The Church is undoubtedly *one*, and so is the Human Race one, but not as a *society.* It was *from the first*, composed of *distinct societies;* which were called one, because formed on *common principles.* It is one society, only when considered as to its *future* existence."

"The Church is *one*, then, not as consisting of one society, but because the various societies or churches *were then modelled, and ought still to be so*, on the same principles, and because they *enjoy common privileges.*"—*Kingdom of Christ*, by Archbishop Whately (the highest living authority in the Church of England).

The learned Dr. Owen fully maintains that in no approved writer for two hundred years after Christ, is mention made of any organized, visibly professing Church, except a local congregation."—*Owen*, as quoted by Crowell (*Church Manual*, p. 36).

"The usual and common acceptation of the word [ecclesia] is that of a particular Church, that is, a society of Christians, meeting together in one place under their proper pastors, for the performaace of religious worship and the exercising of Christian Discipline.—*Chancellor King, vide Primitive Church.*

Peimitive Churches were composed of Baptized Believers.

Tertullian, in his Apology to the governors of Africa, thus defines his Church: "We are a body united *in or by a profession of religion*, in the same rights of worship [in a perfect equality] and in the bonds of a common hope. *We meet in one place, and form an assembly* [Ecclesia—Church], that we may, as it were, come before God in one united body, and so address him in prayer, &c."—Chapter 39.

JUSTIN MARTYR: As many as *are persuaded and believe* that the things which we teach and declare are true, and promise that they are determined to live accordingly, are taught to pray and to beseech God with fasting, to grant them remission of their past sins, while we also pray and fast with them." The person, "having repented of his sins," is "*washed*—in the laver of baptism." "And this washing is called illumination, since the minds of those who are thus instructed are enlightened, and *he who is enlightened is baptized also* in the name of Jesus Christ," &c. "We, then, after having so washed him who hath *expressed his conviction and professed the faith*, lead him to those called brethren, where they are gathered together [as in Church capacity] to make common prayers with great earnestness, both for themselves, and for him who is now enlightened, and for all others in all places, that having learned the truth, we may be deemed worthy to be found men of godly conversation in our lives, and to keep the commandments, &c. — *Justin's Apology* as translated by Chevalier. *Sec.* 80, 85.

These passages, from the Apologies of Tertullian and Justin, are invaluable, and must forever settle the question with all candid persons, that in their day [A. D. 250–300] the churches of Christ were bodies of believers "washed in that laver of baptism," washed in that water "upon a profession of their faith, and are then united to the body, the Church, in the same rights of worship, and in the bonds of a common hope." If any one can think unconscious infants were baptized and received thus, let him reflect upon the above passage, in this Apology of Justin Martyr.

"The apostles have also taught us for what reason this new birth is necessary. Since, at our first birth we were born *without our knowledge* or consent, by ordinary natural means, and were brought up in bad habits, and evil instructions, in order that we may no longer remain the children of necessity or of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and judgment, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins which we have before committed, the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, is pronounced over him *who is willing* to be born again, *and hath repented* of *his sins.*"—*Apology*, Sec. 80.

The reader can see that they commenced calling the sign baptism by the thing signified—regeneration or the new birth. This led ultimately to the corruption of the ordinance, and introduced the dogma

of baptismal regeneration, which has been revived of late by A Campbell, of Va., and which is the only design of baptism taught in the Methodist Discipline. See office for baptism, Wesley's Treatise on Baptism, in Doctrinal Tracts.

The following note in Gieseler's History, upon this period, is significant, and of great weight in its bearing against infant baptism; the existence of infant baptism in the second century:

"At this period (A.D. 117-193) originated the custom of the Roman Church, which continued down to the middle ages, of requiring those who were baptized to recite the creed, first in Greek, then in Latin. Cf. Edm. Martene de Antiquis Eccl. Ritibus, ed. 2, t. i. p. 88; A. Gavanti, Thesaurus, Sacr. Ritum. ed. G. M. Meratus, t. i. p. 42." Gieseler, vol. i. p. 150. It would be difficult for *infants* to repeat the creed in Greek!

Mosheim, although a Pedobaptist, upon the authority of these and the fathers of the first six centuries, frankly declares that during the first century, *whoever professed* to regard Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, and to depend on him for salvation, was immediately baptized and admitted into the Church."—Vol. i. p. 82.

So Neander, Coleman—— cum mul. cal.

ARTICLE II.

SEC. 1.—*Powers of a Church.*—The members of each particular Church are invested with full power to receive those whom they judge worthy into their fellowship, administer the discipline of the body, try, censure, and expel the unworthy, by a vote of the assembled body, in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament.

SEC. 2. It is the right and duty of the members of each Church to select and elect their own teachers, pastors, and officers, and dismiss them when they judge best for the interest of that particular Church;

such officers being accountable to the Church for malfeasance in office or unchristian conduct, as are the private members.

SEC. 3. Each particular Church, being an independent, executive democracy, is the highest earthly source of authority, and from its decisions there can be no appeal, save to the law of Christ and the judgment of sister churches; it, however, can reconsider its own decisions, whenever the majorit is iny favor of a reconsideration.

SEC. 4. It is the right and duty of each Church, as such, to decide and declare what it considers the teachings of Christ respecting Church order, Church ordinances, laws, terms of communion, Christian doctrine and duties, and to govern its members accordingly, but its decisions bind no other church.

SEC. 5. These powers, rights, and duties, cannot be delegated, or conceded or alienated with impunity.

SCRIPTURAL PROOF.

Mat. xviii. 14–20. Here the Saviour gives the minute details with respect to personal offence. If the offender cannot be brought to repentance by private remonstrance, he is to be arraigned before the whole Church—his brethren, his peers, and by them his case is tried and decided. If he will not submit to the decision of the Church, he is to be expelled. There is no higher ecclesiastical court to which he can appeal. He may apply to another Church, and that Church being an "independent republic," can receive him, if it is satisfied that the judgment of the excluding Church was immature or unjust. Mark well; the Saviour did not say, tell it to the class-leader, or the preacher in charge; he did not say, report it to the committee, or to the session of ruling elders; did not say, tell it to the clergy, the Conference, the Presbytery, or the Assembly, but to *the Church*—the assembled membership of any particular Church, and if the voice of that body is not

heard, when it is according to his teachings, expel him, and he would ratify the act in heaven.

NOTE 1.—It is evident that no Church can try a private offence, under any circumstances, until this law has been observed. If she does so, she herself violates the law of Christ. There is no exception made in any case. The informal bringing of the case before the Church by one of the parties involved, or by a third party, instigated by one of the aforesaid parties, does not make it a public offence, or warrant the Church to proceed to trial. She must promptly refuse to hear, and require the offended party to proceed in accordance with the law. If the party refuses, she must at once expel him for a contempt and violation of law, authority of the Church, and hold the accused as presumptively innocent, until he has been arraigned, tried, and convicted, according to law.

NOTE 2.—If a private offence can be converted into a public offence, so as to render inoperative the law in Matt. 18, in case one of the parties, or a prosecuting party, instigated by one of the parties, should bring the case to knowledge of the Church, by charges, then this law could be evaded, contravened and rendered inoperative in every case. In case reports are in circulation prejudical to the character of a member, he has a right to appeal to his church for protection. In which case it will be her duty to appoint a Committee to examine into the truth or falsity of the same, and report accordingly.

1 Cor. v.—A PUBLIC OFFENCE.—There was a public offender in the Church at Corinth. Paul exhorted the brethren to exercise the needed discipline; mark, he did not write to the preacher or the Session to administer the discipline, but to the Church—the members of it. See ver. 4: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are come together, [*i. e.*, as a Church, evidently], and my Spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan," &c. See Mat. xviii. 20, 17, 18.

That the supreme judicial and executive powers are vested in the membership, is evident, from ver. 7: "*Purge* out the old leaven, *i. e.*, expel from your body and fellowship—from the house of God—every unworthy member. This was addressed, not to the clergy, or the elders, but to the *membership* of the Church. Such a command could not be addressed to the Methodist Episcopal Church, North or South, nor to the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, nor yet to the Presbyterian Church of Geneva, of France, of Scotland, or America.

Again: Vers. 12, 13, "Do ye not judge them that *are within?* But them that are without God judgeth."

2 Cor. ii.—Read the whole chapter. The offending man above had been tried, and excluded from the Church at Corinth, and had now bitterly and truly repented of his sin, as every Christian will; and

Paul, knowing this to be the case, writes again to the Church—the brethren, the members—entreating them to restore the penitent man. He does not command them, but affectionately beseeches them to restore to the penitent their former fellowship, saying, Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many—the voice of the whole, or of the majority of the membership. The clergy, or the elders, are not so much as once named in either of these instructions to the Church.

Rev., chapters ii. iii.—The instructions and reproofs Christ gave to the seven churches in Asia, respecting discipline, doctrine, or duty, were not addressed to bishops of Asia, or to ruling elders of the seven churches, but to the members of each Church, through its ministers, thus recognizing them as invested with the supreme judicial and disciplinary powers; and he teaches them also that they are, as churches, directly responsible to him, and that he will inflict punishment for disobedience—blot out their organizations.

The apostle Paul, we have seen, did not presume, upon his own authority, to expel or receive a member into the Church at Corinth, nor did Peter receive the first Gentile converts upon his own authority. He first took six brethren (enough to constitute two or three churches) with him, and when Cornelius and his friends professed faith in Christ, and demanded the rights and privileges of Christians, Peter evidently referred them to his brethren, saying, "Can any man forbid these persons to be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

Touching the right of the members of each Church to have a voice in the selection of their teachers and pastors, and the election of their officers, we urge two arguments:—

1. It is the inalienable right of all men to elect their own rulers, or officers, and teachers; and the New Testament nowhere denies to Christians the exercise of it.

2. The examples of such elections in the New Testament teach, that it is both the right and the duty of Church members to elect their teachers and officers. See Acts i. 15-26. The assembled Church elected, by their votes, an apostle in the place of Judas.

Acts vi. 2, 6. The whole Church is called together, and, by their suffrage, they elect seven deacons, who are ordained by the apostles.

2 Cor. viii. 18, 19, 23. A brother is chosen of the churches, to accompany Titus and Paul to bear their benefactions, and distribute them among the poor saints in Jerusalem.

See also Acts xv. 1, 2, 4, 12, 22, 23, 30. The brethren at Antioch were brought into confusion by the teaching of certain Judaizing teachers, who had come down from Judea. They determined to ask for the advice of their brethren of the Church in Jerusalem, and of the apostles. They, the brethren, chose and sent messengers to go up and consult with them, and defray their expenses. These messengers go up and call the Church together, with the apostles and elders. The Church determine, with the aid of the apostles, what advice to give, and wrote a letter to the brethren in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia, &c. The messengers returned to Antioch, and "gathered the multitude together," and submitted the epistle to *them*

Historical Testimony.

Clement of Rome says (Epistle i. 44) that the presbyters were at first appointed (*katasthathentes*) by the apostles, afterwards (*upo eteron ellogimōn andrōn sune udokesases tēs ecclēsias pasēs.*

Cyprian (Epistle 52) declares how the bishop or pastor of a Church was created and chosen: "Episcopus factus de Dei et Christi ejus judicio de clericorum testamento, de plebis suffragio." Also Epistle 68: "Plebs ipsa maxime habet potestam vel elgendi dignos sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi." The people themselves especially have the power either to elect suitable ministers, or to reject or expel unworthy ones. Origen, in his Homily vi. c. 3, "Et Episcopus deligatur plebe presente." The bishop is elected by the people present. And he assigns a potential reason for the wisdom of Christ in vesting the election in them: "Quæ singulorum vitam, plenissime novit, et uniuscujusque actum de ejus conversatione perspexit." *Since they* have known most intimately the life of each [one of the candidates,] having witnessed the acts and conversation of each. See *Giesseler*, vol. i. ch. iv. § 69.

Little by little, commencing in the third century, the clergy, coveting more authority, usurped the rights of the people, until the pure secession, when the Catholic party became first an aristocracy, then a hierarchy, then popery, while the pure churches everywhere retained their original scriptural government—an executive democracy. *Orchard's His. F. B.*

[A. D. 100–200.] "The highest authority was in the *people*, or the whole body of Christians." The assembled people elected their own

rulers and teachers, or by *authoritative consent* received them when nominated to them."

The assembled people did every thing that is proper for those *in whom the supreme power of the community is vested;* excluded profligate and lapsed brethren, and restored them; they decided the controversies and disputes that arose; they heard and determined the causes of presbyters and deacons."—*Mosheim*, vol. i., pp. 81, 82. See Neander, Lord, King, Coleman.*

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* Since some have misrepresented the foregoing brief statement of the powers of a Church, the following explanatory notes and authorities are added:

NOTE 1. The sovereignty or rather *independence* of each church is limited by the plain teachings of the New Testament—which is the only statute book of the church, the teachings of which equally protect the rights of *each individual member*, and the rights of all churches *to freedom of opinion*, and its expression by word and act. Each church is independent save of the laws of Christ, to act as she sees fit. Nor is she amenable, *ecclesiastically*, to any other church, association or convention of churches. If she governs herself strictly by the teachings of Christ, she will enjoy the hearty fellowship of all other churches of Christ; if she disregards those teachings she will justly forfeit the fellowship of all other churches, and her *acts* and *ordinances* should be accounted by them as null and void, and her letters of commendation discredited.

NOTE 2. While each church is vested with the right not to make, but to construe and *execute* the laws of Christ only, and govern herself and discipline her members accordingly, yet she misconstrues and violates those laws at the hazard of forfeiting the favor of Christ and the fellowship of association with all other churches.

NOTE 3. That neither the construction of the laws of Christ, decisions or the disciplinary acts of one independent church are binding upon any other church; and members, who may chance be deprived of membership by a *misconstruction* or mal-administration of the laws of Christ, in the estimation of any other church, may and should be promptly restored to membership in said church. Furthermore, if one church fails to discipline her members for palpable violations of the teachings of the New Testament, such as open communion, infant sprinkling, drunkenness or attendance upon, and participating in, the sinful pleasures of the world, no sister church is under any obligation to receive her letters of credit or to invite the members of such a church to her communion. Indeed, no church should do the one or the other

NOTE 4.—*Church Comity.*—Should a brother, claiming to have been unjustly excluded from his church, apply to another church for membership, the church applied to should hear his statement, and if convinced that possibly the applicant has been unjustly treated, she should apply to the excluding church for a copy of the records, etc. If, after an examination of these, she is convinced that the brother has been wronged, it would be courteous in her to request the excluding church to re-examine the case with the advice of several sister churches. If the church refuses to do this, or should do it, and still refuse to redress the wrong

done the brother, the church applied to may receive said member into her fellowship

BAPTIST AUTHORITIES.

1. "Each church acts for itself alone, and cannot bind the action of any other church. Each one should, in the spirit of Christian courtesy, respect the action of every other; but only so far as that action is according to the teachings of the New Testament; and every church is to be judge and interpreter of those teachings for itself."—*Dr. Hiscox, Baptist Church Directory. p.* 58.

2. "But the relation between different local churches, is not such as to bind each church to receive the ministers and members of any other church. This obligation was not felt even in the days of the apostles. John commanded, 'If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house; neither bid him God speed.' These teachers of false doctrine were probably members of some local church, which, like the church at Pergamos, tolerated error; but their membership did not entitle them to universal respect and confidence. Some have regarded each local church as acting for the whole body of the faithful; and have inferred that its acts are binding on every other church. But this opinion is inconsistent with the true doctrine of church independence, and with the separate responsibility of individuals and churches. * * * * * Each must act for itself, and not claim to bind the other. But when a church becomes corrupt in faith or practice, neighboring churches are bound to withdraw their fellowship."—*Dr. Dagg, in Church Order.*

3. "A church owes courtesy to every other church, but it is under no obligation to take part with it in wrong doing. The injured (i. e., excluded) person may therefore apply to any other church for admission. It is perfectly competent for them to examine the case for themselves, and if, in their opinion, the member has been guilty of no wrong, (i. e., worthy of expulsion) they may receive him."—*Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches, F. Wayland, p.* 178.

"Nor can one church overrule another, for each church is independent."—*Ib. p.* 346.

4. "If a case should occur in which manifestly a member was improperly and unjustly excluded, and the church should persist in refusing to restore him, he ought to have a remedy. Another church being fully convinced that he is entitled to membership, should, after suitable delay and a careful investigation of the case—the other church having been duly notified of their intention—receive him.." —*Church Members' Manual, by Crowell, p.* 178.

ARTICLE III.

SEC. 1.—PERSONAL RIGHTS.—As each individual, upon entering into the service of Christ and union with one of his visible churches, takes upon himself

vows of personal faithfulness to the authority and government of Jesus Christ, and solemnly pledges himself to labor, to the extent of his ability, to preserve the faith and order of the Gospel in its purity, independent of the action of any other member to the contrary—it is evident that no conceivable circumstance can release him from his individual responsibility and solemn duty to interpret the teachings of Christ for himself, and to govern his own acts according to his conscientious convictions of right, independent of consequences. In all matters of indifference—i. e., where no principle or law is involved—it is the duty of the member to submit to the ruling of the majority, but when principle and conscience are involved, he must act according to his convictions of right, though he act alone. It would, therefore, be his duty, should he see the church fully resolved to violate the laws and depart from the order of Christ, to earnestly, faithfully and affectionately *protest;* but if this is disregarded, he should withdraw.

Sec. 2. Numbers, though they be the majority of a church, cannot excuse him in wrong doing, or in sanctioning wrong doing. That it is the religious duty of the member to sink his individuality and responsibility in the voice of the church, and to submit in all things to its authority, is one of the cardinal pillars of the Papacy.

Note I. Should a church ignorantly or under improper influence, disregard the plain law of Christ in the arraignment of a member for trial, it is his duty to resist the proceedings, by an appeal to the authority of Christ and by protestation. No principle of justice revealed by God, recognized among men, require a man to

submit to a trial in violation of the law that protects his rights. Should he submit to be tried, even under a protest, he would be acquiescing in a known violation of the law and should submit to the consequences. A body of men in church or state, that would, against earnest protest and appeals, force a man into trial in violation of law, evidently entertain malicious designs towards him, and the verdict will be in accordance with their *will*, not *law*.

NOTE 2. Should a church proceed to try *contrary to law*, and the refusal on the part of the member to be tried, it would be but a *mock* trial.

SCRIPTURE AUTHORITIES.

2 Thess. III : 6. The command to withdraw from those that walk disorderly, is as binding upon one Christian as upon one hundred—upon the *individual* as the church—upon the minority as the majority.

"In all things, not contrary to his conscience, the *member* should submit to the authority of the church. But in all questions of faith and conscience, he should do what he believes to be right, even though the church should condemn him for it."—*Dr. Hiscox, in Baptist Church Directory, p.* 101.

"As Christ has given laws to his churches, and bound them to their observance, every Baptist has a right to be tried by that law, and if it is refused him, he has an inalienable right to withdraw, and should other Baptist Churches, upon investigation of the case, see proper to recognize him as a brother, their authority for doing so is unquestionable. But should this position be denied, then a death blow must be given to the doctrine of the independence of the churches; for that cannot be an independent body, which has neither the authority nor power to do what is right. And we go even further than this, and remark, that every *individual* is bound to interpret the law for himself and vote accordingly; and should the church, of which he is a member, pass a resolution to abandon all discipline, or to administer it upon principles which are obviously at variance with the law of Christ, and should they refuse to correct their errors, and persist in their unscriptural course, it could be not only his right, but his duty, to come out from among them. And if this is correct reasoning, then of course minorities consisting of several persons, have the same right."—*Banner and Baptist, Ga.*

ARTICLE IV.

SEC. 1. RIGHTS OF MINORITIES.—Minorities have a right as well as majorities. If an individual has rights in the Church of Christ, a company of individuals have also; and they evidently have the right to protect their rights under the constitution, the province of which evidently is to protect the rights

of the minority. A constitutional, i. e., Scriptural minority, however small, is always right, and should be so recognized by all Christian Churches.

SEC. 2. When the majority departs, in the estimation of the minority, from either the *faith* or *order* of the Gospel, notwithstanding remonstrance and protest the minority may justly assert its right under the constitution to withdraw from the disorderly majority, and submit its claims to be the Scriptural representative of the church to the decision of all the churches with which she associated. If they decide that the minority have abided by the law of Christ, they will recognize it as the orderly and proper church, and the majority as in rebellion to Christ, and withdraw all fellowship from them until they repent.

NOTE 1. It is conceded that if the members composing the minority should see fit to apply to other churches for membership rather than remain together, to represent the church, it would be their privilege to do so.

AUTHORITIES.

II Thess. 3 : which is as binding upon a minority as upon a majority.

III John 9 : Diotrephes and his majority was condemned by the Apostle, and when he visited the place he evidently repudiated the majority and restored the minority their rights, and recognized them as the church.

"We say that the minorities have rights, and the principles involved are not changed should a majority consist of one, five or ten. And we will not evade the discussion as applicable to the lowest number and at the threshold of oppression—even at the time of arraignment.

"Can a minority, under any circumstances, properly protest and withdraw, at the time of arraignment, or during the progress of the trial of a member? No one can mistake the import of this proposition, and we proceed to offer the following thoughts.

Christ is Law-giver to his church. The law of arraignment for personal offences, is clearly laid down in Matthew, xxiii chapter, 15th to 18th verses, inclusive. The time to determine the legality of arraignment is at the *time* of that *arraignment*. It cannot be at the end of the trial, for after a man is excluded, he can have no right to raise a question of this kind in the church. He is to her a heathen man and a publican. Besides it would be said, that *since he did not sustain himself* in the trial, he would *pick some flaw in the proceedings*. The law upon the

subject is very plain, and a minority at the proper time should insist upon its observance. If a majority repudiate Christ's law, and vote to proceed, it raises the strong presumption that justice will not be done, and would afford unmistakable grounds for protest and withdrawal of the minority. We cannot see any danger in such a precedent. If to insist that a church should observe the plain law of the only Law-giver, is a dangerous precedent, we say, let us have dangers, for no one will say there are no greater dangers in palpable violations of Christ's laws. It will not do to say that these things are to be developed during the trial, for the question is not legitimate during the trial. The *only time* when it can be properly met, is when the question is before the church. A vote in the face of the Scriptures and the opinions of the great and good, would, we repeat, in our opinion, be properly met by protest and withdrawal.

Here is the argument.

1st. There is some protection for injured minorities.

2d. One protection is secession.

3d. Secession should be resorted to for a sufficient cause.

4th. A sufficient cause may exist in the unscriptural arraignment of a member.

5th. For there is only one Law-giver in Zion.

6th. He has given specific laws for the arraignment of members for personal offences.

7th. The time to interpret these laws concerning arraignment and test the facts upon that single issue, is at the time of arraignment.

8th. Protests are based upon objectionable votes.

9th. That would be an objectionable vote which determined to proceed, contrary to the plain law of Christ. Therefore, a minority could rightfully protest and withdraw from a majority under such circumstances.

In our opinion, the same conclusion can be reached by a different method, as follows :

1st. There are no absolute sovereignties upon earth.

2d. A Baptist church is sovereign—subject to limitations. 1. It is limited by the *Laws of Christ*. 2. By the inalienable rights of conscience.

3d. By her own *constitutional provisions*.

4th. By the rights of other churches equally independent.

If a church should over-reach either of these limitations, her acts in such a case would be *null* and *void*. She may over-reach the first limitation in the arraignment of a member. The only time that a minority can rightfully and properly say so, is when the issue is before the church. To meet this issue then, at the proper time, a minority may, therefore, then and there, protest and withdraw.

If then this inherent right exist, founded in the eternal principles of justice, and rendered doubly sacred by the laws of the precious Saviour, who can blame injured minorities for withdrawing from their oppressors? Nor, in our judgment, does it materially affect the claims of a minority, to public sympathy, and fellowship of the good, because it may be the opinion of some, that such a minority may have acted somewhat irregularly, and may have gone too far in their opinions relative to the entire extinction of their oppressors, as a Baptist Church."—*Banner and Baptist, Ga.*

Majorities and Minorities.

Does the power of the church lie in the majority, and are the minority always to acquiesce in their determinations?

In indifferent matters it is, without controversy, the duty of the minority to submit for the sake of peace and conscience. To resist the will of the majority in such indifferent instances would be very injurious to the church, and of no benefit to those who hold out in the opposition. Even in the election of officers, where the candidates are both duly qualified for the work, and no just exception can be made to either, it becomes the minority to acquiesce in the vote of the majority, and to rest satisfied with it; because it be the pleasure of God that the elders should be chosen by suffrage. It were to no purpose to proceed to the vote, if its decision in such cases might be resisted without any breach of just order and decorum. *But if the majority in any case be (as they may be) corrupt, and the proceedings objectionable from any partialty or prejudice, then the minority would sin in acquiescing, and hereby they would dishonor God, and wrong their own souls. Here, those who compose the minority must resist the vote, as they would be kept from iniquity; and their opposition if properly conducted, will be approved by Him who hath called them to do those things which are well pleasing in his sight.* "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." When the camp of Israel apostatizes, the tabernacle of the Lord is pitched without the camp afar off, to which the congregation of the Lord is to go, and there worship God.—*Decision of English Baptists, in* 1724.

"Since the government devolves on the church collectively, constituting a democracy, and because all the individuals composing the body cannot be expected, in all cases, perfectly to harmonize, therefore, it is allowed, that the *majority shall rule.*

"But *majorities* may err, and do wrong, and their acts transcend the divine statutes, and become unjust and oppressive to *minorities*, thus forming an unlawful administration of the government; therefore, the acts of majorities are only to be recognized, approved, and sanctioned, when they are evidently in accordance with the laws of Christ as recorded in the New Testament.

"In disputes and differences of opinion, large minorities are, perhaps, quite as likely to be right, as small majorities, therefore, majorities should act cautiously, and not invade their rights. But if minorities think themselves injured, there is no source of redress, no higher tribunal of appeal. They may retire, and find a home in some other church: or they may organize themselves into a new one: or they may call a council, and receive advice and an expression of opinions. But a council can neither correct the wrong, nor punish the wrong-doers, any further than the force of their advice and opinions may affect them, or the public sentiment.

"By many it is thought an evil in the independent form of church government, and a defect in its democratic constitution, that there is no central and ultimate tribunal of appeal beyond and above the individual church, where both churches and ministers, when unfaithful and unworthy, can be judged and punished. But this evil is more apparent than real. And so far as the system is subject to abuse, the evils are abundantly compensated by the real, substantial and important advantages which it secures.

"Indeed it is enough to say, that this form and method of government is *divinely given;* therefore, it must be right. Therefore, also, it must be liable to the fewest evils, and productive of the greatest benefits."—*Hiscox's Baptist Church Directory.*

This very independency of the churches and the right of a member who feels himself aggrieved to apply to any church in the whole land for a restoration to church membership, renders the government of the churches of Christ far superior to any one of the various religious societies devised by men. All of them, almost, without exception, are aristocratical or hierarchal, in which the power is centralized and wielded by a few. The evil influences, prejudicial to a member or a minister, that controlled the Presbytery, or session, or quarterly, or annual Conference, may possibly control the Convention or the General Assembly, or the General Conference, from the decisions and ruinous effects of which he cannot possibly escape, however unjust they may be. He is irrevocably cut off from every Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Methodist society in the whole land. But if a score or one hundred independent Baptist churches may chance to be so under the influence of *one* minister or a body of ministers, determined on his ruin, as to refuse him an impartial hearing, he may nevertheless find a thousand of other equally independent churches that will most cheerfully do so. If he can produce evidence of his innocence, it is impossible for him to be long deprived of his Church relations by the malice and machinations of the most powerful enemies. In this can be seen an evidence of the divine origin of the government of Baptist Churches. It was this feature in the polity of Baptist Churches which convinced Alexander Carson of its divine origin. He said :

"That form of church government which is capable of least abuse, is the most likely to be divine. Now, unquestionably, this is independency. If a particular church on this plan degenerates because erroneous, or indifferent, it has no power to injure others, or draw them into its errors. If all the independent churches of a nation are to degenerate except one, that one cannot be compelled or overawed to follow their example."—*Carson on Baptism*, p. 28.

ARTICLE V.

SEC. 1.—*Officers and their rank and duties.*—There are but two officers in the Church of Christ—pastors (elders or bishops), and deacons.

SEC. 2.—Pastors or bishops are of the same order or rank, and exercise equal authority. It is their office to teach, and take the oversight of the Church in all things pertaining to doctrine and discipline, according to the inspired word.

SEC. 3.—They must be men irreproachable in their private and public relations in life.

SEC. 4.—It is the duty of the deacons, of whom there may be seven, to take charge of all the temporalities of the Church.

SEC. 5.—They must be men spiritually-minded, and of unquestioned probity.

SCRIPTURAL PROOF.

If there were more than two prominent officers in the Apostolic Churches, we have no acount of either their ordination, their qualifi-

cations, or their respective duties. But we learn from the writings of the apostles, that the terms bishops and elders are used *interchangeably*, *i. e.*, one in the place of the other; and in the same chapter, the elders of the Church in Ephesus, are also called episcopoi, bishops, or overseers. See Acts xx. 17, 28. Query. Why did not our episcopal translators translate "episcopoi" in the 28th v., *bishops* instead of *overseers?* Would it not have robbed them of their bishopricks? See 1 Pet. v. 1, 4, where the duties of episcopoi-bishops are enjoined upon the elders of the Churches of Pontus, Galatia, &c.

Now, like duties require like qualifications; and the duties of elders being identical with those of bishops, as we have seen, their qualifications must be the same. These three facts, viz., that the same terms are applied to elders as to bishops, that the same duties are required of the elders as the bishops, and their qualifications, consequently being the same, evidence, clear as demonstration, that bishops and elders are only two titles applied to the same officer.

Paul, in giving instruction to Timothy, his son, in the Gospel, touching the government of his own conduct, and of the Church, also the qualifications of the officers to be appointed, mentions only two, *i. e.* the bishop and the deacons. We may very safely conclude, if there had been other officers to be appointed, their qualifications would have been laid down. Acts vi. 1-7; 1 Tim. iii. 1-13; Phil. i. 1. That elders or bishops, and deacons were the only apostolic officers, and the two former of the same rank and authority, being two names for the same officer, is the unanimous verdict of all standard historians; and is conceded, advocated by Lord King, whose titles converted Mr. Wesley from Episcopacy—the doctrine of three orders in the ministry, *i. e.*, deacons, elders, and bishops; and Mr. Wesley, in his writings, admits that elder and bishop are but two words for the same officer.

ARTICLE VI.

SEC. 1.—*Ordinances.*—There are two commemorative institutions in the Christian Church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and these are under its especial guardianship, and for the integrity of their form,

and purity of their design, the Church is held responsible.

SEC. 2.—*Design of Baptism.*—Baptism is to be granted to believers only, in which they set forth their entire subjection to Christ, and profess their faith in him as their Saviour and King—figuring in their baptism their death to sin—their burial and resurrection with Christ, and their obligation to walk in a new life. Their baptism is to them also a pledge of their own glorious resurrection.

SEC. 3.—*Lord's Supper—Its Design.*—The Lord's Supper is designed to show forth the love and death of the Saviour, the wine representing his blood, with which the new covenant, ratified to every believer—he being cleansed from sin by its atoning efficacy; the bread represents his mangled body, in which he bore the believer's sins upon the tree. While we remember the love of Christ for us, which was unto death, we should also remember his promise, *to come again.*

SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY.

Mat. iii. 1, 6. 11; xxviii. 19, 20; Mark i. 8, 4, 9; xvi. 16; Luke iii. 7, 15, 16, 21; vii. 20; John i. 28, 31; iii. 22, 23, 28; iv. 1; Acts ii. 38, 41; viii. 12, 16, 36, 38; x. 47, 48; xvi. 15, 33; xviii. 8; xix. 3, 5; Rom. vi. 1, 6; 1 Cor. xv. 29; Gal. iii. 27; Mat. xxvi. 27; Mark xiv. 23; Luke xxii. 17, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 20, 25, 26, 27.

NOTE 1.—It is evident if each church is *independent*, and as the appointed guardian is held responsible for the purity of the supper, is positively commanded to see that no manifestly improper person participates in its celebration, then no persons have a *right* to come to her supper, except those whom she would have a right, as a church, to discipline if she regarded them in disorder—therefore the members of one church have no *right* to commune with another church. And no church is warranted by the word of God to invite or permit any to come to supper

under her guardianship, unless she knows that they are sound in faith and orderly in practice. It is for each church to see that the leaven is "purged out" before the feast is observed.

NOTE 2.—If brethren from sister churches are present, known by the church to be correct in faith and life, she can by vote, as an act of courtesy, not right, invite such to participate with her.

NOTE 3.—The Lord's Supper being an ordinance of the church, and can only be celebrated by the church, when assembled in church capacity—not by private Christians, nor by associations or conventions, or missionary meetings.

NOTE 4.—Baptism, likewise, being an ordinance of the church, must in every instance be administered by one authorized by the church.

NOTE 5.—Lack of authority in the administrator, or of qualification on the part of the subject, or an improper design, renders the act a nullity.

ASSOCIATIONS.

A Baptist Association is simply a number of churches *associated* together by a compact, voluntarily entered into for the promotion of missionary and educational interests, more efficient than could be done by individual churches. The churches are represented in the Association by messengers annually chosen. The only bond of union is the strict adherence of each church to the *faith* and *order* of the Gospel. When any associated church departs from the *faith* or violates the order of the Gospel, in the judgment of the other churches composing the Association, the associated churches claim the right to withdraw their fellowship from her, and leave her out of the Association. This of course they should do, or they would make themselves partakers of her sins.

To the Associations the churches annually send up their statistics, and a brief statement of the state of religion in their bounds, and from the collected minutes of Associations the statistics of the whole denomination can be ascertained. To the Associa-

tions the churches usually send up their contributions for missionary and educational purposes, instructing their messengers how to apply them, or allowing them to use their best discretion when the wants of the field are made known.

Powers of Associations.—They have no *legislative* powers. They have no power to interfere with the independency or rights of the churches, being the creatures of the churches, and depending for their existence upon the will of the churches.

AUTHORITIES.

THE old Baptists of Virginia, in 1824, thus define the powers of Associations, and the respect due from the churches :

"An Association is considered by us merely in the light of an advisory council ; for as, according to our views, the independence of churches, and their consequent right of self-government, are clearly established in the New Testament, no authority is vested in an Association, to enforce their decisions on the churches ; nor can they inflict any other penalty on a church, than that exclusion from their body, as an Association.

"It is the province of an Association to deliberate on all such matters as may be proposed by the churches composing that body, as well as on others which may be regularly suggested among themselves, as conducive to the general interest of Zion, or the particular interest of any part of the body, and to offer the result of their united deliberation, by way of advice, to the churches.

"Though, as before stated, the Association can assume no power to enforce these counsels or decisions, it is entirely due from the churches to pay a respectful attention to the advice thus offered to them, and not wilfully to slight, or negligently to overlook, what they have reason to believe is the fruit of good will toward them, and of zeal for the cause of God."

An able writer in the *Southern Baptist Review* thus writes :

"An Association has no more right or power to destroy the existence of a church than has a church to destroy the existence of an Association. Each is the only judge of the materials of which its body shall be composed . and this right is as absolute in one as in the other.

"But the one right, the one duty in the premises belongs to the Association, viz: to determine whom it may rightfully recognize as a component part of its body, and this duty it is bound in good faith to discharge. But this done, its decision binds nobody but itself. Other Associations have just the same right to receive, as a Church, any party opposing the one it has received, as a Church has to receive an applicant for membership who may have been rejected by another Church, subject however to the same courtesy and Christian regard for the acts of its sis-

ter Association, that we have seen to be incumbent on churches under similar circumstances. And this is all of it. If the Association from prejudice or improper bias trampel the right under its feet, it must occupy the same unenviable position in the eyes of sister Associations, that the Church composed of that majority which rejected the right, and refused the behests of the law, *occupies*."

The following is from the editor of the *Biblical Recorder*, N. C., of 1846, and was endorsed (by copying into the *Tennessee Baptist* of that year,) by Eld. R. B. C. Howell and Dr. C. K. Winston, editors.

"Although our churches are free and independent communities, and are confessedly competent to all the demands of self-government, still, as it is important that the freest union and communion should exist among them, it is obviously necessary that there should be some compacts of a social nature, voluntarily entered into for the good and convenience of the whole. Such compacts are found in our district Associations, which are composed of representatives of the churches, and act altogether from delegated power. These Associations are of course adequate to any duty for which they may be invested with power from their constituents, provided always, it shall not exceed the constitutional provisions of the New Testament.

"In accordance with the foregoing principles our Associations are generally competent to the transaction of all business properly pertaining to the interests of the whole. Among other things, they are generally authorized to sit as courts of appeal, in case any party should fail, in his opinion, to get justice done him at the bar of his church. Such compacts usually afford a convenient, competent, and most useful medium of healing breaches, settling controversies, and making a final disposition of cases, for which the parties themselves may, by various means and on sundry accounts, be partially disqualified. They are especially useful in disposing of the cases of ministers, who, on account of the general nature of their vocation, are considered as the property of the churches in general, and whom, in all such cases it is desirable to place as far as possible beyond the reach of local prejudices or personal ill-will.

"In view of the foregoing facts, it is no uncommon thing for a minority of a church, consisting of one person or more, under the conviction that justice has not been accorded them at the hands of their church, to appeal to their Association for a rehearing of their case. And although our Association disclaims all right to *interfere* with the sovereignty or independence of individual churches, still the right is generally conceded them, to give attention to such cases of appeal as may be properly brought before them. Such is, and ought to be, the confidence of our churches in the wisdom and equity of these tribunals, that so far from objecting to their adjudication in such cases, they usually invite it, as a confirmation of their own decisions, or at least as an honorable correction of their errors. And should the church whose conduct may be implicated, be so far refractory as to disregard the decision of an Association, such decision will at least have the effect to direct public opinion, and thereby measurably protect the standing and charac-

ter of an injured minority. Such actions are of great value in case a minister of the gospel should be the aggrieved party. By our principles of church government, our ministers are as completely at the mercy of their church, as are the humblest members. And although a minister, by the nature of his vocation, is in fact the property of the churches, or of the public in general, still there is nothing in the administration of our discipline to protect him against the effect of prejudice, or ill-will, or ignorance, or error of judgment to which all popular assemblies are more or less liable. Under such circumstances it is highly important that there should be some other tribunal, if not of higher authority, at least of *paramount influence*, which shall be beyond the reach of local bias, and which from these causes will exert a sort of conservative control over public opinion.

"Viewed in this light our Associations may be regarded as courts of appeal to which an aggrieved party may bring his case for a hearing, and from which he may obtain a decision which, though it may not affect his position in the church with which he is immediately connected, may greatly affect his standing in the estimation of other churches, and in that of the public at large. Hence also it will be understood, that, when these bodies are called *courts of appeal*, the meaning is, that they have authority to act only so far as it may be delegated by the churches or conceded by usage and public opinion."

Touching the invalidity of unconstitutional resolutions and acts, the same author has the following :—

"It is perhaps proper to add, that in her judicial, no less than in her legislative proceedings, a Church is bound to be governed by her constitutional provisions. And any form of proceeding, or any ultimate action which accords not with the fundamental principles of the N. T., and the articles of her immediate constitution, is justly liable to be set aside as invalid, and *protested against as irregular and unlawful*." Again—

"A law [i. e., rule of action] or resolution, which is not constitutional, that is, which is not in accordance, in the first place, with the fundamental principles of the New Testament, and in the second place, with the written or acknowledged constitution of the Church, must be to all intents and purposes *a dead letter*, and as such *it may justly be protested against or set aside by a dissenting minority*."

I have made the above quotations from the series of articles by Eld. M., and approved by Eld. Howell and Dr. Winston in 1846, to show that it was clearly taught by them and denied by none *then*, that minorities had rights and that dissenting minorities are in duty bound to protest and set aside as irregular and unlawful the unscriptural acts of majorities. The language in which the positions are stated might by unprincipled men be garbled and wrested to favor Presbyterianism. Let the reader distinctly bear it in mind that I repudiate Associations and Councils as "Courts of Appeal," or as possessing paramount authority over the Church. They can possess no more authority than the messengers composing them. The independent churches can through them express their opinion only and give advice. My views of the powers and uses of Associations are clearly stated on pp. 574-5. I fully endorse the definition of their powers, given by the Dover Association, Va., in 1824 (See page 575), and hold myself responsible for no more.

According to the teaching of these men in 1846, whenever in the estimation of the minority, however small, the majority of the church has violated the laws of Christ—departed from either the *faith* or the *order* of the Gospel—the said minority can by a simple protest bring the same to the notice of the Association for its decision in the premises, since, according to the Constitutions of our Associations no church can be allowed a seat in the body, unless in the estimation of the churches composing it, that church holds the *faith* and is observing the *order* of the Gospel—and therefore the Association is compelled to give its decision in the case. If it is satisfied that the church is in disorder, it can and must refuse it a seat, until it rectifies whatever is wrong.

Or the matter may be brought before the Association by the minority claiming to be the constitutional portion of the church, as has been done in multiplied instances, which the history of the divisions of our churches by anti-missionism and Campbellism will show. In all such cases it has been the universal custom of Associations, I believe, to receive the constitutional minority and reject the disorderly majority. The Association does not by disfellowshipping the body claim to *disorganize* or *annihilate* it, but declares that in its estimation it is so unsound or disorderly that it cannot fellowship it without sin. It leaves it to stand alone, or to go its own way.

The position so clearly stated in the last extract is not only sustained by reason but by the Scriptures.

Reason teaches that *might* cannot make *right*—that mere numbers cannot make an unscriptural act valid or justify an approval of it by others. It likewise teaches that we may not go forward with the multitude to do wrong, provided we utter a verbal protest, but that our *actions* must be joined to our voice. *We must refuse to go forward.* The case of Diotrephes (3 John 9,) is conclusive scriptural proof of the position. Diotrephes had by some means gained a preeminent influence over the church—had the majority under his direction and control, and he used his power through the majority to exclude those brethren, as Gaius, who would not obey his behests. Now here was a minority unrighteously excluded by a majority, but which party does the Apostle recognize and approve as *brethren?* Does he not commend Gaius and those who acted with him, as those "walking in the truth," and as acting "faithfully" in what he had done in resisting the majority? And does he not condemn Diotrephes, and intimate that he and the majority acting with him would be rejected by him when he came? The case is clear to those willing to see.

CONCLUSION.

I have thus briefly in this chapter submitted my views of the scriptural church polity generally accepted by Baptist churches. I wish to be understood that I have used the terms "independent" and "sovereign" when applied to churches, in a modified sense. The Churches of Christ are Executive Democracies, and they are strictly bound by the laws of Christ, each member solemnly obligating himself when he becomes a member, to see them respected and executed. When these laws are set at nought or violated, the church becomes rebellious and apostate, and must be separated from all those that abide by Christ. The result is it speedily becomes powerless and dies out.

It will be seen that the government of the Baptist Churches is not a consolidated hierarchy, like the Papacy or Methodism, nor a despotic oligarchy, like Presbyterianism, but in the language of Jefferson, the only pure democracy as an *executive* body—on the face of the whole earth.

While it is not so efficient as despotisms for aggression and self-extension, it is not obnoxious to the same objections, viz., unscripturalness and potency for evil, when its doctrines have become corrupt, and the spirituality of its members extinguished. It has been well remarked, "Our church government is fully sufficient for the ends intended to be answered by him who gave it, binding Christians together just as long and as closely as is desirable, and no more. Like the skin of the fruit, which is sufficient to bind and preserve the whole so long as the pulp is sound, and the juices are wholesome, but when these decay, the skin at once dissolves and lets the mass drop to pieces. So our form of Church government is simple and slender, but quite sufficient to unite both individuals and churches together, so long as they are actuated by the life and indwelling Spirit of Christ. But the whole is purposely bound together in such a manner that, when that vital presence no longer pervades, the whole may drop to pieces like a rope of sand. Other forms may have a stronger power to preserve in an external unity after the life has departed, as the Church of Rome, or Methodist hierarchy; but what is it they then bind together in such a case? A mass of ecclesiastical corruption."

APPENDIX TO 30th EDITION.

THIS work has now been under the public eye for five years. It has attained a circulation unprecedented for a purely controversial work, and still the demand is constant. It has not only visited every State and Territory in this Union, but it can be found in England and Germany.

It has been assailed by thousands, but up to this hour no man has been able to disprove one of its positions, or convict the author of misquoting the Discipline or any authority referred to in the work; provided, *the same edition was referred to which the author used.*

The "Great Iron Wheel" makes its heaviest assaults upon Methodism as an ecclesiastical *hierarchy, a clerical aristocracy,* and claiming, as does the Papacy, *legislative powers*—the right to enact and repeal, alter and amend, at pleasure, the rules and laws by which the members of its societies are governed, and vesting in its ministry the authority to exclude any one refusing to submit to these clerical enactments, though they may have violated no command of Christ. Though this charge is denied, or evaded, by Methodist preachers before the people, yet, what has the world seen since this work first appeared? The General Conference—the "Congress of Methodism," has met twice; once in 1854, in Columbus, Ga., and remained in session *thirty-one days;* and again in 1858, in the city of Nashville, and remained in session *thirty-one days.* No papal conclave ever presented to the world a more imposing attitude than the last General Conference. The Representative Hall of the new State House was secured, and the Bishops ascended the speaker's chair, and the Secretaries, to the clerk's desk, and one hundred and fifty-one Circuit riders,—the representatives of the *ministry,* not the people, into the chairs,—and during thirty-one consecutive days, as long as any State legislature need to sit, the

system called Methodism was overhauled and revised, and a revised code of laws was thus given to the followers of Wesley. No one who ever once looked in upon that assembly could well doubt its legislative character; but, if that sight was not sufficient to convince him of the fact, the revised Code of Discipline certainly will do it, if he is an honest man.

Since the first edition of this work, the Congress of Methodism has spent sixty-two days in revising the Discipline and attending to other concerns, and the result is, such alterations have been made that the Wheel no longer "tracks" with the Discipline of Southern Methodism; I have, therefore, passed through the entire work, and conformed the references to the last edition of the Southern Methodist Discipline for 1858. I might have omitted in the Wheel a whole chapter, as that of 19 pages on the "*confessional*" of Methodism, i. e., Band-meetings, since the last Conference expurgated that abominable feature from the NEW CODE. but it still remains in the Discipline North; and since the Wheel circulates in the North as well as the South, it is proper for it to remain—and then it is not altogether improbable that Methodist Circuit riders might ere long be found, who would deny that such an odious feature ever belonged to Methodism. That the influence of the Wheel has been deeply felt by the "chief ministers" and rulers of Methodism, I think, is clearly manifested in the character of the changes made; and that changes were made in the chapters and *sections* to confuse any reference from the Wheel, I have no doubt. Scarcely had the first copy of the revised Code appeared, when Methodist preachers were heard challenging the quotations in the Wheel by the new Discipline!

I propose to pass, briefly, through the Revised Statutes, and point out the principal changes made by the last two Conferences after sixty-two days in legislature assembled.

EXPUNCTIONS AND ALTERATIONS in the Discipline of 1858.

No. 1. Page 6, third line from the top, *** "*We can assure you that the profits of the sale of it (the Discipline) shall be applied to charitable and religious purposes.*" This assurance is no longer given, but is used, we suppose, to pay the Bishop's salary.

What does the profit upon the Discipline amount to? It is a small book, that costs less than a little dime Testament, and is sold

at 30 cents per copy, the profits cannot be far from 20 cents on each book. Each member is required to have a new one every four years, —600,000 members, multiplied by 30 cents, produces the sum of $180,000, (one hundred and eighty thousand dollars) the clear profits of which would be the snug sum of $120,000! But suppose only one-half, or even one-third of the members purchase a Discipline, the profits are $60,000 or $40,000. Pretty expensive legislation for "the Church!" even this, which comes directly out of the membership who are denied any voice in its government.

No. 2. On p. 37, New Discipline, the old Anti-slavery law, found on p. 24, prohibiting the buying and selling of men, women, and children with the intention to enslave them, is expunged. What was sinful by the Code of 1854—8, is, by the New Code, no longer so!

No. 3. Ans. 1, 2, and 3, under ch. 2, and section VII, are repealed. It is no longer made the duty of the preacher in charge "to see that the other preachers in his circuit *behave well* and want nothing, nor to regulate the *bands*."

No. 4. N. Code, permits supernumeraries and superannuated preachers to be members of Annual Conferences, which the Old Code does not.

No. 5. New Code, p. 47, recognizes any rule as a law, though pronounced *unconstitutional* by the Bishops, provided, two-thirds of the preachers in Conference vote for it! Unless the members obey it, though their Bishops tell them it is an unscriptural law, yet they must be excluded! Is this not papistical?

No. 6. N. C. p. 54, Superintendents of Sabbath Schools, if members, are made members of the Quarterly Conferences.

No. 7. Old Code, from page 57, the law binding upon members and ministers touching attendance upon Bands, is repealed, and expunged from p. 89 New Code—and sundry transpositions are made in the Rules, etc., of section 13.

No. 8. Section XVI. of last Code is absorbed elsewhere, so that section XVII. takes its place, which confuses references, if nothing more.

No. 9. Old Dis., p. 70, requires the local preacher to meet in class, "*if the distance of his place is not too great.*" This merciful

provision is repealed in the New Code, and he must now meet in class whatever be his distance from it.

No. 10. Old Code, p. 70, renders every slaveholder ineligible to office where the laws will admit emancipation. This law, *after standing seventy-six years*, was repealed by the last Conference.

No. 11. An entire now section has been added to the New Code, page 108.

No. 12. The Class-meeting law, pp. 110, 112, N. C., is amended, and outsiders are not allowed to be present, as the clause in the Old respecting them is stricken out.

No. 13. A new section on Love Feasts is added, p. 113 N. Code, and the old law amended. These feasts are now to be used as nets with which to catch members.

No. 14. Sections IV. and V. are stricken out. Section IV. is embraced in the heading of the office for Baptism, p. 172—where sprinkling or pouring is made the law, and immersion the exception —only where it is demanded. In the Old Code, immersion was placed before sprinkling and pouring, in the enumeration of the modes. This is indicative, and is preparing the way for the prohibition of immersion altogether at an early day, in common with all Protestant affusionists.

Section V. is substantially preserved in the ordinance for the Lord's Supper, p. 155.

The reader will see by referring to the New Code that no Methodist minister communes with his members. He does not belong to the same "Church" that they do. He is compelled by law to first take the communion in both kinds himself, and with the ministers present, and after that give it to the body!! Do not the Catholic Priests do so?

No. 14. Rules 13, 14, 15, 16 in the Old Code are repealed in the New. The 14th was, "*Let it be recommended to our people not to attend the singing schools which are not under our direction.*" The Wheel rolled hard upon this feature.

No. 15. Section VIII. in the Old is made sec. VII. in the New Code, and is materially modified.

(1.) The preacher is released from the obligation to read Wesley's Thoughts on Dress annually, and the teachings of the Holy Scrip-

tures are substituted instead. This is a decided improvement.—Why not abolish the Discipline, and take the New Testament instead, a perfect and unchangeable rule of faith and practice! It would save $180,000 every four years that publishing a new Discipline for each member now requires.

(2.) The old law forbidding the giving of tickets to "those who wear high heads and enormous bonnets, ruffles and rings," is repealed, and these high headed, enormously or frightfully bonnetted, or skirted, ringed and ruffled Methodists can now come to the love feasts and the Supper, with or without a "ticket or token"—by the way, the "*tickets and tokens*" are also abolished!

No. 16. Section IX., "Of the Band Societies," that has been an honored institution among Methodists since 1738, was abolished at the very first Conference after the appearance of the "Iron Wheel," and all the laws governing them expunged from the New Code of 1854 and '58. This is a decided improvement to Methodism.

No. 17. New Code, page 146, a law for collection, by Stewards, added to section I. of chap. V.

No. 18. The laws for the *imposition of the hands upon the bread and cup of the Supper*, thus manipulating the emblems, *papistically*, are abolished in the New Code, page 153. Thus another feature of popery is abolished—but the elements are said to be *consecrated* by the prayer of the priest, and if the quantity prayed over is not sufficient to go around, the minister is commanded to consecrate more by using the consecrating prayer appointed! instead of emulating the example of Christ.

No. 18. On page 160, New Code, this sentence is left out which is found in the Old: "And by the baptism of thy well beloved Son Jesus Christ, *in the river* Jordan, didst *sanctify water* for this holy sacrament." Possibly Conference may have concluded with us that this looked very much like admitting that Christ was immersed in the river of Jordan, and sanctified water, a little like the "*holy water*" of the Catholics.

No. 19. The following sentence in Old Code, page 111, teaching the doctrine of baptismal remission and regeneration, is expunged from the New Code: "That they *coming to thy holy baptism, may*

receive remission of their sins by spiritual regeneration," implying that *prior to that act they were unpardoned and unregenerated sinners!*

No. 20. Still more striking, if possible, is the change in the prayer following. In the Old Code it reads: "Give Thy Holy Spirit to these persons *that they may be born again and be made* heirs," etc.; implying, of course, that up to that moment they had not been born again, or made heirs.

This papistical prayer is slightly reformed in the New Code by changing, "may be born again," to "*being born again,*" p. 166, by making the sense ambiguous, which is better than absolutely *popish.*

No. 21. "Dost thou believe in the Holy Catholic Church?" is expunged, and "*Church of God,*" which means nothing particular, is substituted in lieu of it, p. 169.

No. 22. The following impious, blasphemous expressions, found in Old Code, p. 151, are expunged from the N. C. p. 229:

"*Receive the Holy Ghost* for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God *now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands*" *!!* Again: "Stir up the *grace of God* which is given thee by this imposition of our hands" !!

The exposure of this blasphemous and papistical language in the Great Iron Wheel, or some other cause, moved the Conference to substitute a prayer in lieu of the first sentence, and to expunge the latter altogether.

No. 23. It has been asserted that I have accorded to the Bishops the exercise of greater powers than the Discipline allows them, viz.: the control of the press, by the virtual appointment of the editors. We understand the Old Code to allow the Bishop the veto power, since no minister can be appointed to a paper *without the approbation of his presiding Bishop.*" The six Bishops could then, of course, by an understanding, secure the election of any one they pleased by refusing to approve the election of all others. If we err it is for the lack of understanding the language of the law. See the revised law in the N. Code, p. 305: "*Conference Relations of Agents and Editors.*—Each of the officers elected by the General Conference shall be a member of such Annual Conference as he (who?) may select, *with* the approbation of the *Bishops.*"

If we misapprehended the intent of the law on the Old Code, the New one abundantly sustains our assertion. The Bishops control the entire Methodist press—the papers and the publishing house—since no agent or editor of paper or books can be elected by the clergy in Conference without the approbation of the Bishops! This is the culmination of despotic power—the absolute control of the press! What does Louis Napoleon more? And mark the law prohibiting the freedom of speech and the press:

"The editors elected from time to time by the General Conference, *shall exclude* from our periodicals all anonymous matter reflecting injuriously upon the character of individuals [i. e., the officers or clergy, or any of their acts, however outrageous], and all *editorial* and *other articles* calculated to destroy or weaken the confidence of the public in the *doctrines* or *institutions* of our Church."

In vain may any Baptist hope for a fair discussion of any matter pertaining to Methodism with a Conference editor in a Conference paper. Methodists are not allowed free discussion.

No. 24. The last change we have room to notice, is the expunction of the Anti-slavery law, Sec. IX, in Old Code. The public sentiment at the South has allowed that section to stand, which has taught since 1784, that Slavery was itself an evil and a sin of such heinousness, as to disqualify a slaveholder for any office in the Methodist Society.

Each Methodist General Conference that has assembled in the South, until the last, has avowed abolition sentiments that would to-day cause the banishment of any man from the Southern States. They have repealed their abolition laws and utterances, to be sure, but what shall we say of those Bishops and ministers in our midst, that, but as yesterday, as it were, affirmed that Slavery was a sin of so black a hue, as justly to disqualify any Methodist from holding office in the Methodist Society. Have they changed so *radically* and so *suddenly*?

The reader of the present edition will have no difficulty in sustaining, before any tribunal, the statements of this work by the authorities quoted and the last Discipline. We send this book forth again upon its mission of conviction. It has already been blessed to the conversion of multitudes from Methodism, and my

prayer is, that increasing multitudes of members and ministers may be brought by it to see that the Methodist Hierarchy, an institution originated by men, is not the kingdom set up and ruled over by Christ, but an opposer of it—a human organization, rivalling the Divine Kingdom of Christ!

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